INTRODUCTION TO *PHAEDO*

The *Phaedo* is set outside Athens, in Phlius in the Peloponnese, where Phaedo, a native of Elis and one of Socrates' younger friends, tells the story of Socrates' last hours to Echecrates and other citizens of Phlius. The story includes a long discussion between Socrates and two Thebans, Simmias and Cebes, about what happens to the soul after death, centred on four arguments for its survival as a rational entity, the first three of which also give rise to two counter-arguments, themselves followed by attempted refutations; this whole group of arguments, meanwhile, is itself set between a description of the best kind of life, at one end, and a visionary account of the earth and its regions at the other.

So much for the basic structure of the dialogue. Within this structure, Plato locates numerous other elements: a short intellectual autobiography by Socrates, expositions on philosophical method, passing comments on the nature of pleasure and pain, or on the rights and wrongs of suicide. The whole has something of the nature of a Russian doll about it, with new parts continually discovered nesting inside others. In short, there is probably a greater wealth and variety of content in the *Phaedo* than in any other single work of Plato's. Variety of content, too, is matched by variety of tone and style: there is laughter as well as sadness; dry argument alongside purple prose; moments of quick repartee beside longer exchanges; narrative and incident. The translation attempts to achieve something of the same variety, and if, for example, the language and sentence-structure becomes noticeably more elaborate, more formal, sometimes even rhetorical, that is not because the

translator has gone to sleep but because the tone of the conversation itself has changed.

The structure of the dialogue is as follows:

57a–59c: introductory conversation between Phaedo and Echecrates.

59c–61c: Phaedo begins his account. How the conversation started; on pleasure and pain; Socrates is putting Aesop into verse – why?

61c–64a: Socrates claims that the philosopher will actually welcome death,

64a–69e: Socrates defends this claim (his new 'defence'); life, for the philosopher, is a kind of training for death, in which he practises separating soul from the body, its sensations, its pleasures and its desires.

69e–70c: objection – why should we believe that the soul survives death, as a substantial and rational entity?

70c–72e: the 'cyclical' argument (as death comes from life, life comes from death; our souls will be reborn into different bodies).

72e–77d: the argument from recollection (learning is really a matter of recollecting what we learned before we were born, but forgot at birth; in that case our souls must have pre-existed our birth as a composite of body and soul).

77d–84d: the 'affinity' argument (i.e., the affinity of the soul to things unseen and unchanging, like the 'forms'; an argument that gradually slides into persuasive description, for example about the fate of non-philosophical souls, so helping to provoke the objections that follow).

84d–85e: interlude; preface to Simmias' objection.

85e–88b: Simmias presents his objection, comparing the soul to the attunement of a lyre and its strings; Cebes follows up with an objection of his own (while a soul might survive many deaths and rebirths, who knows whether it isn't gradually worn out by the process, so ultimately perishing in one of those deaths?).

88c: consternation among Socrates' immediate audience.

88c–89a: a matching reaction from Echecrates in Phlius.

89a–91c: this new interlude continues, with a warning from Socrates against 'misology' (coming to hate all arguments because some turn out to be untrustworthy).
91c–95a: Socrates replies to Simmias' objection.
95a–102a: preliminaries to the final argument, which constitutes Socrates' reply to Cebes' objection (Socrates sets out and justifies the hypotheses he will need, by way of his own intellectual history).
102a: Echecrates breaks in again.
102a–107b: the final argument (the soul is altogether imperishable).
107c–115a: Socrates relates what he has been told about the true nature of the earth, and its various regions, ranging from the underworld below to the true surface, way above the hollow where we live like frogs around a pond, and perhaps even beyond that . . .
115b–end: Socrates dies.

One of the most striking features about the Socrates of the *Phaedo* is the prominence he gives to a set of ideas that may broadly be termed 'Pythagorean': most notably, the idea of the 'transmigration' of souls, after death, to other bodies, and perhaps the idea of true philosophers as living a life of the mind, 'practising for death' (which, by and large, Socrates himself consistently attributes, somewhat mysteriously, to those who do philosophy 'in the correct way': 64c, 67b, 67d, 67e, 69d, 80e, 82c). Since Echecrates was evidently one of a group of Pythagoreans at Phlius, and Simmias and Cebes have listened to Philolaus, an eminent Pythagorean scientist and astronomer (61d), the way appears open to interpreting the *Phaedo* as Plato's Pythagorean moment; and that, indeed, is how it has sometimes been taken, by modern as well as ancient interpreters. However, Simmias and Cebes generally appear more as open-minded philosophers than as adherents of any special set of doctrines (which Pythagoreanism certainly was, if it was anything); indeed, as an enthusiast for the soul-as-attunement theory, Simmias evidently is no supporter of that quintessential Pythagorean doctrine, the 'transmigration' of souls – and as it

happens, Echecrates too likes the attunement theory (88d). Simmias and Cebes have simply heard Philolaus lecture, and in general the dialogue does nothing at all to identify them (or, for that matter, Echecrates) as Pythagoreans. Plato himself, it seems, was genuinely committed to the idea of transmigration, given that he introduces it in a number of different dialogues. In that respect, and no doubt in others, he may be labelled as a Pythagorean of sorts, or at least as someone who borrowed from and adapted certain aspects of that tradition. (We are not helped by the fact that most of our evidence about Pythagoras and Pythagoreans comes from much later, and is self-evidently contaminated with 'Pythagorean' ideas as discovered, by these later sources, in Plato himself.) As for the theme that the philosopher's life is a kind of preparation for death, which Plato has his Socrates develop over about a fifth of the total length of the *Phaedo* (64a–69e, 77d–84d), that could be little more than a piece of opportunistic borrowing, on a par with similar borrowing from religious traditions such as 'Orphism', or the mysteries of Eleusis (see, e.g., *Phaedo* 69c–d, *Apology* 41a, with notes). The theme is totally absent from all of Plato's other works; it is also the part of his 'defence', as begun at 64a, that most arouses the scepticism of his two interlocutors, so precipitating the final argument, which is altogether tighter than any of the first three, more closely derived from other demonstrably Platonic ideas – and more impressive. If this interpretation is right, then Phaedo will be addressing Echecrates and his friends, as Socrates is addressing Simmias and Cebes, more as philosophers than as Pythagoreans; and Phaedo is in Phlius not because it is a Pythagorean centre (as it may well have been), but to bring the story of Socrates' last conversation, and death, to fellow philosophers and sympathizers in the world outside Athens.

PHAEDO

ECHECRATES
PHAEDO

ECHECRATES Were you there with Socrates in person, Phaedo, 57a
on the day he drank the poison in the prison, or did you hear about it from someone else?

PHAEDO I was there in person, Echecrates.

ECHECRATES So what is it the man said before his death, and how did he meet his end? I'd love to hear. For in fact hardly any of my fellow citizens here in Phlius go to Athens nowadays, and we haven't had a visitor from Athens for a long time who 57b
could give us any clear account of it all, except of course that he'd drunk the poison and died; no one could tell us anything about the rest of it.

PHAEDO So you didn't even hear about the way things went 58a
at the trial?

ECHECRATES Yes, someone did report that to us, and there was something that surprised us: though the trial had taken place some time before, Socrates evidently died only much later. Why was that, Phaedo?

PHAEDO It was chance, Echecrates; just the day before the trial the stern of the ship the Athenians send to Delos had been wreathed.

ECHECRATES What ship's that?

PHAEDO It's the one – so the Athenians say – in which Theseus once took the famous 'twice seven' to Crete and managed 58b
to bring them and himself back safe.[1] The story goes that the Athenians had made a vow to Apollo that, if they did get back

safe, they'd offer an annual mission to Delos in return, and they've gone on sending it to the god every year since. When the mission starts, the rule is that the city should be clean from killing, and shouldn't execute anyone until the ship has completed its voyage to Delos and back again – which sometimes
58c takes a bit of time, if it's caught by contrary winds. The mission starts when the priest of Apollo wreathes the stern of the ship; and by chance, as I say, that happened on the day before the trial. That's the reason why Socrates had a long time in the prison between the trial and his death.

ECHECRATES So what about the circumstances of the death itself, Phaedo? What was said? What happened? Which of the man's friends were there? Or would the prison authorities not allow them to be with him, so that he met his end without friends beside him?

58d PHAEDO Not at all; some of them were with him, indeed quite a lot of them.

ECHECRATES Well, do your best to give us[2] the clearest account you can of everything, unless you're too busy.

PHAEDO No, I certainly have the time, and I'll try to set it out for you; in fact remembering Socrates always gives *me* more pleasure than anything, whether I'm talking about him myself or whether I'm just listening to someone else.

ECHECRATES Your audience, Phaedo, certainly feels the same way; so do try and describe everything as accurately as you can.

58e PHAEDO And so I shall. I myself was affected in an extraordinary way by what I witnessed: I didn't experience pity, in the way you'd expect of someone witnessing the death of a dear friend – the man rather struck me as fortunate, Echecrates, both because of his manner and because of what he said, so fearlessly and nobly did he meet his end; the thought occurred to me that the gods were smiling on him even on the way to Hades, and
59a that, when he arrived there, too, his lot if anyone's would be a good one.[3] That's why I was hardly touched by pity in the way you'd think, given the sad things I was witnessing; but on the other hand neither was there the pleasure that should have come from engaging in philosophy in our usual way – that's the

form our conversation took. I was affected instead in quite the strangest of ways; what I felt was a peculiar mixture comprising both pleasure and pain, as I reflected that this was a man whose life would shortly be at an end. Everyone there was in pretty much the same state, now laughing, sometimes weeping – one of us, Apollodorus, much more than everyone else; I think you're familiar with him and his ways. 59b

ECHECRATES Of course.

PHAEDO Well, he certainly lived up to expectations, and I myself was in a confused state, as were the others.

ECHECRATES And who was actually there, Phaedo?

PHAEDO Of the locals, apart from this Apollodorus, Critobulus was there with his father;[4] Hermogenes too, Epigenes, Aeschines and Antisthenes. Then there was Ctesippus, of the Paeanian deme, Menexenus, and some other local people. Plato, I think, was ill.

ECHECRATES Was there anyone from outside Athens?

PHAEDO Yes; Simmias was there, along with Cebes and 59c Phaedondes, from Thebes, and from Megara Euclides and Terpsion.

ECHECRATES What about Aristippus and Cleombrotus? Were they there?

PHAEDO No, they weren't. They were said to be in Aegina.

ECHECRATES Was there anyone else?

PHAEDO I think that's pretty much the complete list.

ECHECRATES What then about that conversation? Tell us about it.

PHAEDO I'll try to describe everything for you, from the beginning.

Both I and the others had got into the regular habit of visiting 59d Socrates even during the days before, gathering at dawn at the court building where the trial itself had taken place, since it was conveniently near the prison. There we would wait each day until the prison was opened, talking among ourselves, because the prison guard tended to take his time; but when the door was unlocked we'd go in to Socrates, and usually spend the day with him. On the day itself, we gathered even earlier,

59e because on the day before, as we left the prison in the evening, we'd heard that the ship had arrived from Delos.[5] So we made arrangements with each other to arrive as early as possible at the usual place. Well, we came to the prison, and the guard who usually answered our knock came out to us and told us to wait; we weren't to enter until he told us to. 'The Eleven[6] are taking off Socrates' chains,' he said, 'and their orders are for him to die today.' But in fact it wasn't long before he came and
60a told us to go in. So we went in, and as we did we found Socrates freshly unchained, and Xanthippe – you know of her – sitting beside him holding his little son. Well, when Xanthippe saw us she gave out a loud cry, and said just the sort of thing that women typically do: 'Oh, Socrates, to think that this is the last time your friends will talk to you and you to them!' At which Socrates looked towards Crito and said, 'Please let someone take her home, Crito.'

60b Some of Crito's people then led her off, crying out in grief; as for Socrates, he sat up on the bed, drew up his leg and rubbed it with his hand. As he did so, he said, 'How strange it seems, friends, this thing people call "pleasant", and how striking a relation it has to what seems opposite to it, the "painful": the two things refuse to present themselves to a person at the same time, but if anybody pursues one of them and catches it he's practically forced always to take the other as well; it's as if they
60c were two things growing out of a single head. I think,' he said, 'that if Aesop had noticed this aspect of them he would have constructed a story about how the gods[7] wanted to put an end to the war between them, found they couldn't, and so ended up fixing their heads together; which explains why whoever gets one of them finds the other one turning up after it. Just as in fact seems to be happening to me now: when I had the "painful" in my leg from the chain, the "pleasant" seems to have come along following close behind.'

At that point Cebes interjected 'Zeus! Socrates, you did well
60d to remind me. About those poems you've composed, putting Aesop's pieces into verse, and with that prelude to Apollo – lots of people have asked me, as indeed Evenus[8] did only the other day, what on earth you had in mind by composing them, now

that you're here in prison, when you'd done nothing of the sort before. If you care at all about my having an answer to give Evenus when he asks me again, because he surely will, please tell me what to say.'

'Well, tell him the truth, Cebes,' Socrates replied, 'which is that I didn't do my versifying out of a wish to rival his expertise, 60e
or that of his poems, because I knew at once how difficult that would be. I did it rather as a way of exploring the meaning of certain dreams I have, and doing what was required of me in case, after all, it was this kind of "music"[9] they were instructing me to make. The dreams in question are like this – in fact it's the same dream that's visited me many times in my life, in different guises but always saying the same thing: "Socrates, make music; make that your business!" My reaction previously was
to take this instruction as a kind of encouragement; I compared 61a
the dream to spectators cheering on runners in a race, thinking it was telling me to do the very thing I was already doing, "making music", because I supposed that philosophy was the highest music, and that was what I was already doing. But now, after the trial, and when it was the festival to the god[10] that was holding up my execution, it seemed to me that, just in case the dream was after all telling me to make music of this common-or-garden variety, I shouldn't be disobedient but should get on
and do it; I thought it safer not to go off[11] before I'd done what 61b
was required of me, composing poems as the dream told me. So it was, then, that I came first to write a poem to the god in whose honour the current festival was; then, after the god, realizing that any poet worthy of the name has to put together stories rather than arguments, and that I was no story-teller, I just took the stories that I had to hand and actually knew, which were Aesop's, and turned into verse the first ones that happened to occur to me. So that, Cebes, is what you should tell Evenus; tell him to keep well and, if he has any sense, to
come running after me as soon as he can. I'll be going off today, 61c
it seems; the Athenians say so.'

Simmias said, 'What a thing to suggest to Evenus! I've met the man on many occasions, and from what I've seen there's no chance he'll be willing to take your advice.'

'What?' Socrates replied. 'Isn't Evenus a philosopher?'

'I think he is,' said Simmias.

'In that case he will want to, and so will anyone who's a philosopher worthy of the name. However, he probably won't do away with himself; people say that's not permitted.'[12] And
61d as he said this he lowered his feet to the ground, and stayed sitting like this for the rest of the conversation.[13]

Cebes then asked him, 'How can you say this, Socrates? How can it not be permitted to "do away with oneself", if it's philosophical to want to emulate the dying?'

'What's that, Cebes? Haven't you and Simmias heard about this sort of thing from your get-togethers with Philolaus?'[14]

'No, Socrates, nothing precise.'

'What I'm saying is only what I've heard myself; and there's no reason not to pass on what I happen to have heard. In fact
61e there's probably nothing more fitting for someone who's about to make the journey to Hades than to ask questions and tell stories about what kind of journey we think it will be. What else would one do in the time between now and sunset?'[15]

'So why on earth, Socrates, do they say killing oneself isn't permitted? Actually, since you asked, I did hear Philolaus ruling against suicide, when he was visiting Thebes, as indeed I've heard it from others; what I haven't heard from anybody yet is a clear account of the matter.'

62a 'Don't lose heart,' said Socrates; 'perhaps you may hear one.[16] Probably it will appear surprising to you if this alone, in human affairs, is uncomplicated, and it never turns out as in other things, that in some circumstances and for some people it's better to die than to live;[17] and for people like this – well, probably it does appear to you surprising if it's not the right thing[18] for them to do themselves a good turn, but they have to wait around for someone else to do it for them.'

Cebes chuckled and said, in his own dialect,[19] 'You better believe it!'

62b 'Yes,' said Socrates, 'it would certainly seem unreasonable, put like that; all the same there is probably a certain reasonableness about it. There's what's said about the subject in secret writings, to the effect that we human beings are prisoners in a

kind of guard-house, and that no one has any business running away and trying to free himself; that seems to me a deep saying,[20] and one that's not easy to penetrate, but this much at least seems to me to be well said, Cebes, namely that it's the gods that look after us, and that we human beings count, for them, among their possessions.[21] Isn't that how it seems to you?'

'It is,' came Cebes' reply.

'Well,' said Socrates, 'wouldn't you be angry if one of your own possessions killed itself, without a signal from you that 62c
you wanted it to die, and wouldn't you punish it if there was any punishment you could apply?'

'Absolutely.'

'Then probably, from that point of view, it's not unreasonable to suppose that one shouldn't kill oneself until the gods[22] somehow make it necessary, as in the situation in which I now find myself.'[23]

'That much seems likely enough,' said Cebes; 'but I'd like to take you up on what you were claiming just now, that philosophers will accept death lightly: that, Socrates, looks odd, if in fact it's plausible to say, as we were saying just now, that it's the 62d
gods that look after us, and we're their possessions. It would be contrary to reason for the wisest people not to be upset about leaving this kind of service,[24] since it's performed for the best of all possible masters; after all, they're gods. I don't imagine a wise person will think he'd be better off getting free of them and looking after himself – a foolish one, perhaps, yes: he'll suppose that what slaves do is escape their masters, not reckon- 62e
ing that a *good* master's not for escaping from but for staying with, for as long as possible. So he'd run away, not having worked it out; but a person of intelligence, I imagine, will desire always to be in the presence of someone better than himself. And yet this way, Socrates, it's likely to be the opposite of what was being claimed just now: it's for the wise to be upset about dying, and for the stupid to be happy about it.'

When Socrates heard this, he seemed to me to be pleased by Cebes' earnest response. He looked at us, and said, 'There goes Cebes, always sniffing out some argument or other; assenting 63a
at once to what someone says – that's not his line at all.'

To which Simmias said, 'But this time, Socrates, it seems to me that Cebes has a point. Why on earth would people who were truly wise try to escape from masters better than themselves? Why would they leave them so lightly? And it seems to me that Cebes is aiming his argument at you, because *you* are treating it as so light a matter to abandon not just us but what you yourself agree are good superiors to have, the gods.'

63b 'What the two of you are saying is fair enough,' said Socrates. 'The upshot, I think, is that I must defend myself against this charge you're making, as if we were in court.'

'Quite right; you must', said Simmias.

'Well, then, let me try to make a more convincing defence to you than I did to the jurors at the trial.[25] The truth is, Simmias and Cebes, that I'd be wrong not to be upset about dying if I didn't think I was going to join the company, first, of other wise and good gods, and then, too, of dead men better than those to
63c be found up here.[26] But as things are, I can assure you I do expect to arrive in the presence both of good men – well, I wouldn't absolutely insist on that; but be assured that I would insist, if I insist on anything of this sort,[27] that where I'll be going I'll have gods for masters that are wholly good. So that's why I'm not as upset as I might have been; I have high hopes that there is something in store for the dead, and that – so it's long been said, at any rate[28] – this something is much better for the good than for the bad.'

'Well then, Socrates,' said Simmias; 'do you mean to go off and keep this thought of yours to yourself, or will you let us
63d share in it too? It seems to me that the benefit of it ought by rights to be ours too; and if you convince us of the truth of your claim, you'll have your defence into the bargain.'

'I'll give it a try,' Socrates said. 'But first let's find out what Crito here has apparently been wanting to say for some time.'

'And what else would I be wanting to say except what *he*'s been saying to *me* all this time – I mean the man who's going to give you the poison: that I've got to tell you to talk as little as possible, because he claims if people talk it raises their body-
63e heat, and that sort of thing interferes with the action of the

poison. Otherwise, he says people who behave like this sometimes have to take a second or even a third dose.'

Socrates replied, 'Take no notice of him; just let him do his job and prepare to give me a double dose, or a triple one if necessary.'

'I was pretty sure that'd be your answer,' Crito said; 'it's just that he's been bothering me for some time.'

'Never mind him,' said Socrates. 'As for you judges, I'm now going to give you the argument I promised, and show you how reasonable it appears to me to be, for someone who has genuinely passed his life in philosophy, to be confident at the prospect of death and have the highest hopes for the benefits 64a
awaiting him in that other place when he dies. Exactly how this could be so, Simmias and Cebes, I'll try to say.

'Probably the rest of mankind is unaware of what it is that preoccupies all those who actually practise philosophy in the correct way: it's nothing other than dying, and being dead. Well, if that's true, it would presumably be odd for them to look forward to just this outcome all their lives, and then, when it came, to be upset about it – the very thing they'd been seeking all along, and actually *doing*.'

To which Simmias said with a laugh, 'Zeus only knows, Socrates, you make me laugh, when laughing is the very last thing 64b
on my mind! If ordinary people heard you saying what you've just said, they'd think your description was a perfect fit for those who go in for philosophy – and our countrymen[29] would heartily agree: philosophers really do have a death-wish, and even if they can't see it themselves, death is just what they deserve.'

'And actually they'd be telling the truth, Simmias – except for the claim that they can see better than philosophers. Ordinary people can't see in what way true philosophers wish for death, or how they deserve it, or what kind of death they 64c
deserve. So let's go through it for ourselves, and leave ordinary people out of it. Do we think there's such a thing as death?'

'Yes, absolutely,' replied Simmias.

'And we think of it,[30] don't we, as nothing other than the separation of the soul from the body? This is what it is to be

dead: for the body to have come to be by itself, apart from the soul and separated from it, and for the soul to be by itself, apart and separated from the body – death can't, I imagine, be anything but this?'

'No, that's what it is,' said Simmias.

'Now consider the following points, in case you think the
64d same as I do; because it's from these, I believe, that we'll reach a greater understanding of the things we're currently thinking about. Does it appear to you to be a philosopher's business to have worked hard at the so-called pleasures like, for example, those of food and drink?'

'No, certainly not, Socrates,' said Simmias.

'What about the so-called pleasures of sex?'

'Not at all.'

'And what of all the other ways there are of serving the body? Do you think such a person treats these as valuable? Things like acquiring distinctive cloaks[31] or shoes, or any other ways of beautifying the body – do you think he attaches value
64e to these, or does he rather refuse to do so, except in so far as he absolutely can't avoid having something to do with them?'

'It seems to me,' Simmias said, 'that he refuses, if he's truly a philosopher.'

'So in general,' Socrates went on, 'does such a person's business seem to you not to be with the body, from which he removes himself so far as he can, but to be directed rather towards the soul?'

'It does.'

'So the first point is, isn't it, that in such contexts the philo-
65a sopher manifestly tries to free his soul, so far as he can, from its association with the body, in a way that the rest of mankind does not?'

'Apparently so.'

'And it does seem, presumably, Simmias, to ordinary people that anyone who fails to find such things pleasant, and doesn't share in them, has nothing worth living for; and indeed that someone who doesn't care at all for the pleasures that owe their existence to the body comes pretty close to being dead already.'

'Absolutely true.'

'What, then, about the actual business of acquiring wisdom?[32] Does the body get in the way, or doesn't it, if one takes it on as associate in the search? This is the kind of question I have in 65b
mind: do our sight and hearing possess some sort of capacity for truth, or is it perhaps as even the poets are always repeating to us, that nothing we ever hear or see is accurate? Yet if these of all the senses relating to the body aren't accurate, or clear, the others will hardly be either, since I presume all of them are inferior to sight and hearing. Don't you think so?'

'Yes, certainly,' said Simmias,

'When is it, then,' asked Socrates, 'that the soul gets a hold on truth? Clearly, on any occasion that it tries to think about something in the company of the body, the body deceives it.'

'True.' 65c

'Then isn't it in the process of reasoning, if anywhere, that any aspect of things[33] becomes clear to the soul?'

'Yes.'

'And I imagine that the soul reasons at its best when none of these things distracts it, whether hearing, sight, pain, or indeed any of the so-called pleasures – when it comes to be as much as possible by itself, saying goodbye to the body, and when it strives to understand what things really are[34] with no more association, or even contact, with the body than it can help.'

'That's so.'

'So in this case too the philosopher's soul sets the least value 65d
on the body, and tries to get away from it, seeking to be alone and by itself.'

'It appears so.'

'What then about the following points: do we say that there exists something that's just and nothing but just?[35] Or do we say that there's no such thing?'

'Zeus! We certainly say there is!'

'And what about fine, and good?'

'Of course.'

'Well, have you ever yet seen anything like that with your eyes?'

'Certainly not.'

'And do you get a hold on them through any of the other senses that work through the body? I'm talking here about everything – for example about size, health, strength; in a word,
65e about the essence of these and all the other things, what each of them actually is: are they observed at their truest through the body, or is it rather like this, that whichever of us puts himself in a position to *reflect* the most, and the most accurately, on each object of investigation, by itself, he'll be the one who comes closest to an understanding of each of them?'

'Absolutely.'

'So who'll achieve this outcome in its purest form? Will it be the one who succeeds most of all in approaching each thing exclusively by thinking about it, without adducing the evidence
66a of sight in his thinking, or dragging in any other of the senses to accompany his reasoning;[36] the one who, instead, using thought unalloyed, alone and by itself, tries to track down each aspect of things,[37] alone, by itself and unalloyed, having separated himself so far as possible from eyes, ears – the whole body, practically, on the grounds that it confuses the soul and prevents it from acquiring truth and wisdom when taken on as its associate? Isn't it this person, if anyone, Simmias, who'll reach understanding of how things really are?'[38]

'A masterly statement of the truth, Socrates,' said Simmias.

66b 'Well, mustn't all these points together provoke the kind of thought, among those who are genuinely philosophers,[39] that would make them say things to each other like this: "It looks as if there's a path that'll bring us and our reasoning safely through in our search. So long as we have our bodies, and our souls have that sort of contamination to contend with, we're surely never going to succeed sufficiently in acquiring this thing that we desire; and that, we declare, is the truth. For the body pro-
66c vides us with a million distractions because of the need to supply it with food; if it gets diseased, that further impedes our hunt for reality. It fills us full of lusts, desires, fears, fantasies of all kinds – in short, a whole collection of nonsense, the result of which is that really and truly, as the saying goes, we never get a moment to ourselves, thanks to the body, even to think about anything. It's the body and its desires, nothing else, that bring

about wars, factions and fighting; because all wars come about for the sake of acquiring money, and we're forced to acquire money for the sake of the body because we're slaves in its ser- 66d
vice. It's the body's fault, for all these reasons, that we have no time for philosophy. The worst of it is that when we do get a bit of time off from serving the body, and we turn to reflecting about something, there it'll be again, breaking in on our reflections, creating uproar and confusion everywhere, and generally stirring things up so that just because of *it* we can't get a sight of the truth. The fact is that all this has shown us that, if we're ever going to have pure knowledge of anything, we've got to separate ourselves from the body and observe things by them- 66e
selves by means of the soul by itself; and as our argument indicates, we'll only achieve that separation when we die – it's then, it seems, that we'll have what we desire, what we say we're lovers of, namely wisdom, not while we're alive. Look at it this way: if it's impossible to get pure knowledge of anything in the company of the body, then one or the other of two things must hold: either knowledge can't be acquired, anywhere, or it can be, but only when we're dead; because that's when the soul will 67a
be alone by itself, apart from the body, and not until then. And even while we are alive, it seems, the way we'll come closest to knowledge will be by having as little to do with the body as possible, doing nothing in association with it unless we simply can't avoid it, not letting it infect us with the kind of thing it is[40] but purifying ourselves from its influence – until such time that the gods themselves set us free. And if we become pure in this way, by separating ourselves from the folly of the body, then it's likely enough that we'll be in the company of others pure like ourselves, and we'll have knowledge through our own selves, by themselves, of everything unalloyed;[41] and this, presumably, 67b
is the truth. For perhaps it is not permitted to the impure to grasp the pure." These, Simmias, are the sorts of things that all who desire understanding in the correct way will, I think, inevitably say to each other; these are the thoughts they must have. Don't you think so?'

'Yes, Socrates, without a doubt.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'if all that is true, my friend, there are

great hopes for anyone going to the place I'm going that there, well enough, if anywhere, he'll acquire the very thing that has
67c so preoccupied us in life past; so that the change of place that's now appointed for me brings the hope of good things with it, as it does for any man who thinks he has prepared his mind as he should, through a kind of purification.'

'Absolutely,' said Simmias.

'And "purification" turns out, doesn't it, to be the very thing we've been talking about for some time in our discussion: a matter of separating the soul so far as possible from the body, and having got it used to collecting and gathering itself together, by itself, away from every part of the body, so that it lives alone and by itself, to the limit of its capacity, both in the present and
67d in the time to come, freeing itself from the body as if from chains?'

'Absolutely,' said Simmias.

'Then it's *this* that people are referring to when they talk about "death": a freeing and parting of soul from body?'[42]

'Yes, without doubt,' Simmias replied.

'And, as we've been saying, it's especially, or rather only, those that go in for philosophy in the correct way who are always eager to set the soul free; what philosophers practise is exactly this, the freeing and parting of soul from body. Isn't that so?'

'Apparently.'

'So, as I was saying at the beginning, it would be absurd if a
67e man should use his life to practise being as close as possible to a state of death, and actually spend his life like that – and then be upset at the approach of the real thing?'

'Absurd, of course.'

'In that case, Simmias,' said Socrates, 'those occupied correctly in philosophy really do practise dying, and death is less frightening for them than for anyone else. Look at it from this point of view: if they are at odds with the body in every respect, and what each of them desires is to have his soul alone by itself, wouldn't it be most unreasonable if they were afraid and upset
68a about actually getting what they desired? Shouldn't they be happy to be rid of their unwanted companion and go off to the

very destination where, so the hope is, they'll achieve what they've been lovers of all their lives, namely wisdom? The death of human darlings,[43] wives, sons has prompted many a willing volunteer to pursue them to Hades, driven on by the hope of seeing there the objects of their desire, and of being with them; are we to suppose that someone who's really in love, with wisdom, and firmly holds this same hope, that nowhere else but in Hades will he encounter his love in any way worth speaking of – 68b
are we to suppose that *this* sort of person will be upset about dying? Won't be happy to go off to that other place? One should certainly think so, if, my friend, he really is a lover of wisdom;[44] because he'll firmly hold to the view in question, that nowhere else but there will his encounter with wisdom be pure. If this is so, then, as I was saying just now, wouldn't it be most unreasonable if such a person were afraid of death?'

'Zeus! Most unreasonable!' Simmias said.

'Then if you see anyone upset at the prospect of imminent death, will you take that as sufficient proof that he wasn't a lover of wisdom after all, but a lover of the body? And I imag- 68c
ine the same person will also be a lover of money and a lover of honour[45] – one of the two, or else both.'

'Absolutely right,' said Simmias.

'Then doesn't it follow, Simmias, that what's called by the name "courage" belongs especially to those in the state we've described?'[46]

'Yes, I suppose it does,' was Simmias' reply.

'Then moderation[47] as well, what ordinary people too call by that name – not being excited about one's desires,[48] but treating them with decent contempt: doesn't this belong exclusively to the sort of people in question, who despise the body more than anything, and spend their lives loving wisdom?'[49]

'Necessarily so,' said Simmias. 68d

'Yes,' Socrates went on, 'because if you think about everybody else's "courage" and "moderation", they'll strike you as pretty odd.'

'How so, Socrates?'

'You recognize,' he replied, 'that everyone else considers death one of the great evils?'

'Very much so,' said Simmias.

'Then when people with their sort of "courage" face up to death, it'll be because of a fear of greater evils?'

'That's so.'

'In that case everyone who is courageous apart from the philosopher is so through being afraid – through fear, in fact; yet it's quite illogical that a person should be made courageous by a kind of fear and cowardice.'

68e 'Yes, certainly.'

'What about those non-philosophers who live orderly lives? Isn't it the same in their case, that they're moderate through a kind of *lack* of restraint? Even though we say it's impossible, all the same what happens to them, with this simple-minded "moderation" of theirs, actually is like this; they're afraid of being deprived of different pleasures that they also desire, and so they end up perpetually abstaining from one set of pleasures
69a because they're under the control of another. Yet the name they give to being ruled by pleasures is actually "lack of restraint". The net result is that it's through being controlled by pleasures that they control other pleasures, which is not unlike the state I was ascribing to them just now, of being somehow made "moderate" through a kind of lack of restraint.'

'Yes, it seems so.'

'Yes, my dearest Simmias, because I don't suppose that this is the correct sort of exchange for the acquisition of virtue[50] – exchanging pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, fear for fear, the greater ones for the lesser, as if they were a kind of currency; the only true coin, I hazard, for which all these things
69b should be exchanged is *wisdom*. It's when everything is bought and sold for this, or rather in the company of this, that there'll truly be courage, moderation, justice, all true virtue – that is, in the company of *wisdom*, whether pleasures and fears and anything else like that are added or whether they're taken away. When they're being exchanged for each other in isolation from wisdom, well, virtue like that is surely a bit like stage-painting; it's really the sort of virtue that belongs to slaves, with nothing
69c wholesome about it, or anything true. Really and truly, perhaps, moderation, justice and courage are a sort of purification

from all such things, and wisdom itself is what does the purifying. So I dare say we shouldn't underestimate the people who established the rites of initiation: when they said that whoever arrives in Hades without undergoing initiation into the rites will lie in the slime, while whoever arrives purified and initiated will dwell with the gods, all the time they were using riddles to hint at the truth.[51] For as the ritual experts say, there are indeed "many that carry the thyrsus,[52] but in truth few that are the 69d
god's": the few, as I think, are none other than those who have practised philosophy in the correct way. In my whole life, so far as I could, I have left nothing undone in my eagerness to become one of these; as to whether my energy has been spent correctly, and we've made any progress, we'll know the plain truth, god willing, when we get to that other place – and that we will, I think, in only a short time. This, then, Simmias and Cebes,' said Socrates, 'is the defence I offer, to show how reasonable it is for me not to take it hard, or to be upset, that I'm leaving you behind, 69e
along with our divine masters here, in the thought that there too, in Hades, I'll encounter good masters, and friends, no less than here. So, if I've defended myself any more persuasively before you than I did before my Athenian judges, I shall be content.'

After this speech of Socrates', it was Cebes who spoke next. 'Socrates,' he said, 'the rest of what you were saying seems to me to be well said; but in relation to the soul, a lot of people 70a
wouldn't believe you. They're afraid that, when it's separated from the body, there's no longer any place for it to be. On the very day a person dies, they fear, and just as it's becoming separated from the body, the soul is destroyed, and perishes; as it emerges, it flies off in different directions, dispersed like breath or smoke,[53] and it no longer subsists anywhere at all. If it were gathered together somewhere, alone by itself and rid once and for all of the evils you described just now, then it 70b
would be a good and fine thing to hope that what you say is true; but that soul exists after a man is dead, and that it has some capacity for wisdom,[54] is probably something that requires no small process of reassurance and proof.'

'What you say is true, Cebes,' said Socrates. 'What then should we do? Do you want us to talk these things through,[55]

to see whether they're likely to be as I say or whether they're not?'

'I for one,' replied Cebes, 'would be delighted to hear your thinking on the matter.'

70c 'I certainly don't think,' said Socrates, 'that anyone who heard me now, even if he were a comic poet, would accuse me of idle chatter, and of talking about things that don't concern me.[56] So if you agree, we should look into the question.'

'Let's look at it in this sort of way: let's ask whether, in fact, when people are dead, their souls are there in Hades, or whether they're not. Well, there's an ancient doctrine, I recall, to the effect that the souls of the dead are indeed there, having travelled there from here, and moreover that they travel *back* here through being born again, out of the dead.[57] If that's how it is, with the living being born again out of the dead, mustn't our
70d souls indeed be there in Hades? I imagine they'd hardly be born again if they didn't exist at all. So it'll be sufficient proof that they do, if in fact we could show that the living are born from the dead and only from the dead; if that's not so, then we'll need a different argument.'

'Yes, quite,' said Cebes.

'Well then,' replied Socrates, 'if you want to see more readily what's at stake, think about this not just in relation to human beings, but to animals generally, plants too, and in fact to every-
70e thing that admits of changing and coming-into-being. Let's see whether *everything* comes to be in the following way, namely through opposite things coming to be from no other source than their own opposites – everything, that is, that actually has some opposite, as for example the beautiful is presumably opposite to the ugly, the just to the unjust, and so on in countless other cases. So the question for us is this, whether anything that has an opposite must always come from what is opposite to it. For example, when something comes to be bigger, I imagine it must be from being smaller before, that it then comes to be bigger?'

'Yes.'

'Then if a thing becomes smaller, too, it'll be from being
71a bigger before, that it comes to be smaller later?'

'That's so,' said Cebes.

'And again, the weaker will come to be from the stronger, the quicker from the slower?'

'Yes, absolutely.'

'What about if something becomes worse? Won't it come to be worse from being better? And if more just, from more unjust?'

'Of course.'

'So we've a sufficient grasp on this point, have we: that everything comes to be in this way – things opposite to other things come from those opposites?'

'Yes, absolutely,'

'What about this next question: is there also the following sort of feature in all cases, namely that between the two members of every pair of opposites there are also two processes of coming-into-being; the first from one opposite to the other, the 71b
second in the reverse direction, from the latter to the former? After all, in between a bigger thing and a smaller one there's increase and also decrease in size, and we accordingly call the one process "increasing in size", the other "decreasing in size".'

'Yes,' said Cebes.

'Then too we recognize separating and combining, and cooling and heating up, and so on and so forth – even if we don't always have names for them,[58] still in actual fact it has to be like this in all cases: opposites come to be from each other, and there is a corresponding process of coming-into-being of either opposite into its pair.'

'Yes, certainly,' Cebes replied.

'What do you say to my next question: does *being alive* have 71c
an opposite, as being awake has being asleep?'

'Yes, absolutely,' said Cebes.

'What is it?'

'Being dead,' said Cebes.

'So do these come to be from each other, given that they're opposites; and are the processes between them also two, since there are two of them?'

'Yes, of course.'

'So I'll give you one of the pairs I mentioned just now,' Socrates said, 'that is, both the pair itself and the processes involved; and you go ahead and tell me what the second one is. My contribution is: there's being asleep and there's being awake; being
71d awake comes from being asleep, being asleep comes from being awake; the two processes involved are, first, going to sleep, and second, waking up. Are you happy with that or not?'

'Yes, absolutely.'

'Well, now it's your turn,' Socrates said; 'do the same for me with life and death. Don't you claim that being dead is opposite to being alive?'

'I do.'

'And that they come from each other?'

'Yes.'

'So what is it that comes from the living?'

'The dead.'

'And what', asked Socrates, 'comes from the dead?'

'There's nothing for it,' said Cebes; 'I'll have to agree it's the living.'

'Is it from the dead, then, Cebes, that living things, living people, come to be?'

71e 'It appears so,' Cebes said.

'In that case,' said Socrates, 'our souls *are* there in Hades.'

'It seems so.'

'Then is one of the two processes involved with this pair actually obvious? It's dying, presumably – isn't it?'

'Yes, certainly it is,' Cebes said.

'So what will be our next move?' asked Socrates. 'Shall we not supply the opposite process to balance this first one? Are we going to leave nature like this, hopping along on one leg? Or must we balance dying with some opposite process?'

'Absolutely, yes,' said Cebes.

'What process?'

'Coming to life again.'

'Well then,' said Socrates, 'if that really is the process in
72a question, coming to life again, won't that be a matter of coming to be from dead to living people?'

'Yes, absolutely.'

'It counts as agreed between us, then, in this way too, that the living have come from the dead no less than the dead from the living; and I think it seemed to us that if this were the case, it would be sufficient proof that the souls of the dead must be somewhere – from where they were to be born again.'

'It seems to me, Socrates,' said Cebes, 'from what we've agreed, that it must indeed be like that.'[59]

'Well, look at it in the following way, Cebes,' he said, 'and you'll see that we weren't wrong to have agreed as we did, either, or so it seems to me. If one set of opposites didn't always come 72b
into being to balance the ones corresponding to it, going round as if in a circle, and instead the process were to be in a straight line, from one opposite to the one facing it, with no turning back or bending round to the other, do you realize that everything would end up having the same character and being in one continuous state, simply ceasing to come to be anything else?'

'What do you mean?' asked Cebes.

'It's not at all difficult to grasp what I'm saying,' said Socrates; 'for example, if there was such a thing as going to sleep, but no waking up from sleeping was taking place to balance it, you'll recognize that in the end the state of things would make 72c
the case of Endymion[60] seem a mere trifle; no one would notice him, because everything else too would be in the same state as he was – asleep. Again, if everything were combined without being separated out again, soon what Anaxagoras describes would be a reality: "All things together."[61] In the same way, my dear Cebes, if, everything that partakes in life were to die, and after things died they stayed like that, wouldn't it inevitably end up with everything dead and nothing alive? After all, if 72d
living things came to be from non-living ones, and the living ones died off, what would there be to prevent everything whatever from being finally used up in the process from living to dead?'

'Nothing whatever that I can think of, Socrates,' said Cebes; 'what you say seems to me to be quite incontrovertible.'

'Yes, Cebes; this seems to me just how things are, and in my view we're not being deceived when we agree to the points in question: these are real facts – things do come back to life; the

living do come from the dead; and the souls of the dead do exist.'

72e 'And again,' responded Cebes, 'this is also in accordance with the idea you're habitually repeating to us, Socrates, if it's true, to the effect that what we're doing when we're "learning" is actually recollecting;[62] if we follow this line too, well, I imagine it follows that we must have learned in some previous time the
73a things we're now recollecting. That'd be impossible if we weren't to suppose that the soul existed somewhere before it came to be in this human shape of ours. So if we look at it in this way too the soul seems to be something deathless.'[63]

'But Cebes,' Simmias said at this point, 'what sort of proofs are there for this? Remind me, because I don't presently have much of a memory of them.'

'There's one quite beautiful argument for it,' replied Cebes; 'it's that when people are questioned, provided someone puts the questions well, they'll give the right answers, for themselves, on everything. And they wouldn't be able to do this if they didn't actually have knowledge in them, and a correct account.
73b So, if one points them to diagrams and things of that sort, we have here a quite clear proof that this is how things are.'[64]

'If that's not enough to convince you, Simmias,' said Socrates, 'see if you'll come to share our view by looking at things in the following sort of way. What you're doubtful about is how what's called learning can be recollection – right?'

'No,' said Simmias, 'I'm not doubting you; what I need is the very thing we're talking about – to recollect the argument. In fact I almost remember already, from the explanation Cebes tried to give, and I'm convinced; but just the same I'd like to hear how *you* tried to explain it.'

73c 'Here it is,' said Socrates. 'I imagine we agree that, if anyone's going to recollect something, he must have had knowledge of that thing at some previous time?'

'Yes, certainly,' replied Simmias.

'So do we agree about this point too, namely that recollection is when knowledge comes to one in the following sort of way? Like this: if, on seeing something, or hearing it, or perceiving it with one of the other senses a person not only recognizes that

thing but also comes to have in mind a second thing too, the knowledge of which isn't the same as that of the other, aren't we right in saying that he *recollected* this second thing that he came to have in mind?'[65] 73d

'How do you mean?'

'Take this sort of case: I imagine that knowing a person is one thing, knowing a lyre another.'

'Of course.'

'Well then, you're aware that, when lovers see a lyre their beloved is always playing, or a cloak he wears, or anything like that, they're affected in this way – not only do they recognize the lyre, there also comes to mind the shape of the boy the lyre belongs to. That's recollection; just as someone on seeing Simmias will often recollect Cebes – and there must be countless other cases of a similar sort.'

'Zeus! Yes, countless,' said Simmias.

'My next question is whether cases of this kind represent a 73e
sort of recollection; what counts most of all as recollection is when someone has this sort of experience in relation to things he's actually forgotten, because time has passed and he's not been thinking of them?'

'Yes, certainly,' said Simmias.

'What about the next point: is it possible to see a painting of a horse, or a painting of a lyre, and recollect a person? And to see a painting of Simmias, and recollect – Cebes?'

'Yes, absolutely.'

'Then what about seeing a painting of Simmias and recollecting Simmias himself?'

'That's certainly possible,' said Simmias. 74a

'Then doesn't it turn out that there's recollection that starts from things that are *like* the recollected item, and also recollection that starts from things *unlike* it?'

'It does.'

'But whenever someone recollects something from things that are like it, mustn't he always have this additional experience, of having in mind whether or not this thing he's starting from is deficient at all in respect of its likeness to the thing he's recollected?'[66]

'He must,' said Simmias.

'Well, then,' said Socrates, 'see what you think of the following. We say, I suppose, that there's something that's equal – I don't mean a stick that's equal to a stick, or a stone that's equal to a stone, or anything like that, but some further thing over and above all of these, that is, the equal itself: *are* we to say that something of the sort exists,[67] or not?'

74b 'Zeus! Yes,' said Simmias; 'indeed we are, most emphatically!'

'And do we also know what it is?'

'Yes, definitely,' said Simmias.

'And where have we got our knowledge of it from? Isn't it from the things we were mentioning just now, that is, through seeing equal sticks or equal stones, or whatever else it may be – isn't it from these that we come to have that other equal in mind, even while it's distinct from them? Or perhaps you don't think it's distinct from them? Here's another consideration for you: even while being the same stones and sticks, aren't equal stones and equal sticks sometimes clearly equal to one stick or stone but not equal to another?'

'Yes, certainly.'

74c 'Well, did the equals by themselves[68] ever appear clearly unequal to you, or equality inequality?'

'Not so far, Socrates.'

'In that case,' Socrates said, 'those other equals[69] and the equal itself are not the same thing.'

'It doesn't appear so at all, to me, Socrates.'

'And yet it's from these equals', said Socrates, 'even while they're distinct from that other one, that you've nevertheless come to have in mind, and gained, your knowledge of it?'

'Very true,' said Simmias.

'Then you've got that knowledge of it from them – whether it was like them or whether it was unlike them?'

'Yes, absolutely.'

'In any case it makes no difference. So long as, on seeing one
74d thing, you come to have something else in mind, like or unlike, *from* seeing the first one,' Socrates said, 'what occurs must be recollection.'

'Yes, definitely.'

'Now do we have the following sort of experience in relation to what we perceive in the case of the sticks, and in general with all those pairs of equal things we were talking about just now: do they appear to us to be equal in the way that what's equal by itself is equal, or do they fall a bit short of that, in respect of being the kind of thing *the* equal is? Or are they entirely up to the mark?'

'They fall short by a long way,' replied Simmias.

'Well, do we agree that, when a person looks at something and thinks to himself, "This thing that I'm now seeing means to be the sort of thing that something else in the world actually 74e
is, but it's falling short, and is in fact incapable of being the kind of thing the other is; it's just not up to it" – someone who's thinking that must, I imagine, inevitably have had actual knowledge beforehand of the thing he's claiming that this other thing, the one in front of him, resembles but falls rather short of?'

'He must.'

'Well, then, is it or isn't it this sort of experience that we ourselves have in relation to those equal pairs and the equal itself?'

'It is, absolutely.'

'In that case we must have known the equal before the time 75a
when we first saw those equal pairs and thought to ourselves, "All these equals strive to be the sort of thing the equal is, but they fall rather short of it."'

'That's so.'

'But we're also in agreement that we haven't got this thought, and couldn't have got it, from anywhere except from seeing, touching or one of the other kinds of perceiving; I'm counting all of them as the same in this case.'

'Yes, they are the same, Socrates, in relation to what the argument means to show.'

'But then it's precisely from our acts of perceiving that we must get the thought that all the equal things we perceive in 75b
those acts strive after what's equal by itself and fall rather short of it – or is this what we're saying?'

'Yes, it is.'

'In that case it must have been before we began seeing and hearing and using our other senses that we actually gained knowledge of what the equal by itself is, if we were to be in a position to refer to it the equals from our acts of perceiving, and to have the thought that all such equals are eager enough to be the sort of thing *the* equal is, but are just inferior to it.'

'That must follow from what we've previously said, Socrates.'

'Well, then, it was as soon as we were born, wasn't it, that we were seeing, hearing and in possession of our other senses?'

'Yes, certainly.'

75c 'And – this is what we're saying – we must have got our knowledge of the equal before we got these?'

'Yes.'

'Then we must have got that knowledge, it seems, before we were born.'

'It seems so.'

'Now if, having got it before we were born, we were born with it, here's a question for you: did we know, both before we were born and as soon as we were born, not just the equal, the larger and the smaller, but also absolutely all such things? For our present discussion isn't restricted to the equal; it's just as

75d much about the beautiful itself, and the good itself, the just, the pious, and, as I say, *everything* of this sort – all the things to which we attach this label of ours, "what *is*",[70] both in our questions, when we ask them, and in our answers when we're in the role of respondents. So we must have got our knowledge of each one of these before we were born?'

'That's so.'

'Necessarily, too, if having got our knowledge in each case we don't forget it, we must be born knowing each of the things in question, and we must know them our whole lives through – because that's what knowing is, to possess knowledge of something after having got it, and not to have lost it; that's what we call forgetting, isn't it, Simmias, the loss of knowledge?'

75e 'Absolutely, yes, Socrates,' said Simmias.

'Whereas if we get our knowledge before we are born but lose it on being born, and then later through the use of our perceptions we get back those pieces of knowledge[71] that we had at some previous time, what we call learning would be a matter of getting back knowledge that was ours anyway; and we'd surely be correct if we called that recollection?'

'Yes, certainly.'

'Yes, because it seemed to us perfectly possible for a person 76a
to perceive something – whether he's seen it, or heard it, or whatever – and from this come to have something else in mind that he'd forgotten, which the first thing was unlike or like but was anyway close to. The outcome is that, as I say, one of two things must be the case: either we were born knowing these things, and we all know them our whole lives through, or else the people we say are "learning" are actually *recollecting* their knowledge after their birth, and "learning" will be – recollection.'

'That's how it is, Socrates, very much so.'

'So which of the two alternatives do you choose, Simmias? That we were born with the knowledge in question, or that we 76b
recollect things later on that we'd got to know before?'

'At this moment, Socrates, I'm not able to make my choice.'

'Well, are you able to choose in the following case – see what you think about it: will a man with knowledge be able to give a reasoned account in relation to the things he knows?'

'He certainly must know how to do that, Socrates.'

'And do you think everyone's able to give such an account in relation to the things we were talking about just now?'

'I wish that were true,' said Simmias; 'but I fear it's much more likely that this time tomorrow there'll no longer be anyone in the world able to do so in the manner those subjects deserve.'

'So, Simmias,' said Socrates, 'you don't think everyone does 76c
have knowledge of them?'

'Certainly not.'

'They're recollecting, then, what they learned at some point in the past?'

'That must be so.'

'So when was it that our souls got their knowledge of those things? Certainly not since we were born as human beings.'

'No, quite.'

'Then before that.'

'Yes.'

'In that case, Simmias, our souls existed even before they were contained within this human shape, existing without bodies; and they had intelligence.'

'Unless after all, Socrates, we get these pieces of knowledge at the very time we're being born; we haven't yet ruled out that it was then that we got it.'

76d 'Very well, my friend, but what other sort of time is there for us to *lose* them? We're not born with them in our possession, as we've just agreed; or is it that we lose them at the same time that we're getting them? Or do you have some other time for it up your sleeve?'

'Certainly not, Socrates; I didn't notice I was talking nonsense.'

'So is this where we end up, Simmias: if the things we're always talking about really exist – something that's beautiful by itself, something that's good by itself, in short all the things of that kind that there are;[72] if we refer their counterparts, from
76e our acts of perceiving, to them, rediscovering a knowledge that was there before and so was ours already; and if we really do compare the things we perceive to those others, then it must follow that just as the beautiful, the good, and so on exist, so does our soul, even before we've been born, and if they don't exist, all of this argument of ours will have been in vain? *Is* that how it is, namely that an equal degree of necessity attaches to the two claims – both that those other things exist, and that our souls do, before our birth as well as after it? Are we saying that, if the other things don't exist, the rest won't hold either?'[73]

'I'm emphatically in agreement, Socrates,' said Simmias, 'that an equal degree of necessity attaches to both, and it's a
77a fine thing indeed that the argument should resort to saying that our soul exists before we're born just as surely as do all those other things that you're now talking about. Speaking for myself,

nothing is as evident as this, that all such things exist as certainly as anything could – a beautiful, a good and all the other things you were referring to just now; and my own view is that our proof is good enough.'[74]

'And how does it seem to Cebes?' asked Socrates. 'We must convince Cebes too.'

'He's with me,' said Simmias, 'or so I think; and yet he's the most obstinate person in the world when it comes to distrusting arguments. Still, I think he's been fully persuaded of this much, that our soul existed before we were born. On the other 77b
hand, whether it will also go on existing after we die is something that even I don't think has been shown; there's still that fear blocking the way, the one that Cebes was attributing to ordinary people, that even as a person is dying his soul is scattered into pieces and that this, for it, is the end. Why shouldn't it come into existence by being put together from some other source, so that it exists before it gets into a human body, but when it's got there it lasts only until it's separated from the body again, when it too comes to an end and is destroyed?'

'A good point, Simmias,' said Cebes; 'it looks as if only half 77c
of what's required has been shown, namely that our soul existed before our birth. What needs to be shown over and above this, if the proof is to be complete, is that the soul will exist no less after our death than before our birth.'

'Actually, Simmias and Cebes,' said Socrates, 'it's been shown even now, if you're prepared to put the present argument together with the one we agreed on before, to the effect that everything living comes from the dead. If the soul pre- 77d
exists, and if its coming into life and being born can't occur from any other source except death and being dead, how can it not exist after it dies,[75] as well, given that it's got to be born again? So actually we've already shown what you're asking for. All the same, I think you and Simmias would like to give this point more attention even now; I do believe you've the fear that children have, that the wind will literally blow the soul apart as 77e
it emerges from the body and scatter it into pieces, especially if its owner happens to die in a gale instead of calm weather.'

Cebes laughed and said, 'Well, Socrates, suppose we do have this childish fear, and try to persuade us otherwise – or rather, don't suppose *we* have it; perhaps there's a child in us, all the same, that has fears like that.[76] So go on, try to stop this infant being afraid of death like the bogeyman.'

'Yes,' said Socrates, 'but what he'll need is to be sung to each and every day, until you succeed in charming it out of him.'[77]

78a 'So where do you suppose, Socrates,' said Cebes, 'that we're going to find an expert in such spells, since you are abandoning us?'

'Greece is a big place, Cebes,' said Socrates, 'and I imagine it must have good men in it, not to mention those from non-Greek races; you'll need to hunt them all down in search of the enchanter you need, whatever the cost in money or effort, because there's nothing you could better spend your money on.[78] But you must search yourselves too, in concert with each other; for it may well not be easy to find others more able than yourselves to do what's needed.'[79]

78b 'Consider it done,' replied Cebes; 'now let's go back to where we left the argument behind, if you're happy to do that.'

'Of course I'm happy with that; why wouldn't I be?'

'You're right,' said Cebes.

'Well,' said Socrates, 'I suggest we should ask ourselves the following sort of question: what kind of thing is it that's liable to get "scattered into pieces"? What kinds of things should we and shouldn't we be afraid it'll happen to? After we've answered that, the next step will be to ask whether soul is of the first sort or of the second; that will tell us whether to be confident or fearful on behalf of *our* souls.'

'True,' said Cebes.

78c 'So will it be what's been compounded, and is composite in nature, that's liable to suffer this fate, and be pulled apart just as it was put together; whereas if there's something that's actually incomposite, it's this alone, if anything, that's liable not to have such a thing happen to it?'

'That's what I think,' said Cebes.

'Well, then: it's things that are always in exactly the same state, isn't it, that are most likely to be the ones that are incomposite,

with the ones most likely to be composite being those that are always changing and never the same?'

'It seems so to me.'

'Then let's go back,' said Socrates, 'to the very same things we resorted to in our previous argument. Take by itself that set 78d
of things of whose essence we try to give an account as we question each other and offer our answers:[80] are they always in exactly the same state, or are they now like this, now like that? The equal by itself, the beautiful by itself, each "what is" by itself, which just is whatever it is:[81] can *these* ever undergo change of any kind at all? Or is each "what is" among them always, being uniform in and by itself, in exactly the same state, never allowing of any variation whatever of whatever kind?'

'They must always be in exactly the same state, Socrates,' said Cebes.

'And what about ordinary beautiful things, like people, or horses, or cloaks, or anything else of that sort, or ordinary 78e
equal things – all the ordinary things that share the same names as those other, special things? Do they stay in the same state, or is it the complete opposite with them, so that they are practically never the same at all in relation either to themselves or to each other?'

'I agree with your description of these too,' said Cebes; 'they're never the same.'

'And these you can actually touch, see and grasp with the 79a
other senses; whereas the things that stay in the same state you can't get hold of except with the mind's reasoning. Such things are unseen and not accessible to the eyes.'

'Absolutely true,' said Cebes.

'So are you happy for us to assume two kinds of existent things, one visible, the other unseen?'

'Let's do that,' said Cebes.

'And the unseen is something that's always in the same state, while the visible is never so?'

'Let's assume that too,' said Cebes.

'Now here's a question for you,' said Socrates: 'isn't it the 79b
case that part of us is body, part soul?'

'It is,' said Cebes.

'So to which of the two kinds of things do we say that the body will be more similar, more akin?'

'That's obvious to anyone,' said Cebes: 'the visible kind.'

'What about the soul? Is it something visible, or something unseen?'

'Not visible to human eyes, at any rate, Socrates,' said Cebes.

'But our question was surely just about what was visible and what was not visible with reference to human nature; or do you suppose we had some other nature in mind?'

'No, human nature.'

'So what do we say about soul? That it's something visible or invisible?'

'Not visible.'

'Unseen, then?'

'Yes.'

'In that case soul is more like what's unseen than the body is, while body is more like the visible.'

79c 'That there's no denying, Socrates.'

'Here's another point. Weren't we also saying a while ago that, when the soul brings in the body for the purpose of looking into anything, whether it's through seeing, or hearing, or some other act of perceiving (because that's what looking into something through the body is – looking into it by using our senses), then it gets dragged by the body into things that never stay the same, and itself starts wandering about in confusion, dizzy as a drunk, just because it's in contact with things like that?'

'Yes, quite.'

79d 'But when the soul does its investigation alone and by itself, it takes itself off to what's unalloyed, eternal, deathless and unchanging, and insofar as it's akin to that, it's always to be found in its company, whenever it gets the opportunity to spend time on its own; it stops wandering about, and in its relation to those other things it stays in exactly the same state, because it's in contact with things that are themselves unchanging;[82] and the name we give to what the soul experiences in this case is "wisdom" – right?'

'Quite beautifully said, Socrates,' said Cebes, 'and true.'

'So once again I ask you: both from what we were saying before, and from what we're now saying, to which of the two 79e
kinds of things does it seem to you the soul is more similar, more akin?'

'It seems to me, Socrates,' said Cebes, 'that from this line of inquiry even the slowest person would agree that soul is completely and absolutely something more similar to what is always in the same state rather than to what isn't.'

'What about the body?'

'More like the latter.'

'Now look at the matter in this way too. When soul and body are together, nature lays down that the latter should be 80a
ruled as a slave, while the former rules as its master: from this perspective too, which of them do you think resembles the divine,[83] and which the mortal? Or doesn't the divine seem to you the kind of thing that naturally rules and leads, and the mortal the sort of thing that is naturally subject and slave?'[84]

'It does.'

'So which does the soul resemble?'

'It's obvious, Socrates, that the soul resembles the divine, the body the mortal.'

'Then consider, Cebes,' said Socrates, 'whether from all that's been said we reach the following results: that soul is 80b
something that's very like what's divine, deathless, the object of intellect, uniform, undissolved, and always in exactly the same state as it ever was; while body in its turn is something very like what's human, mortal, mindless,[85] multiform, tending to dissolution, and never the same as it was before. Have we anything to say against these results, my dear Cebes, to show that this isn't the way things are?'

'No, nothing.'

'Well then, given all this, wouldn't it be fitting for the body to be quickly dissolved, but for the soul, by contrast, to be absolutely indissoluble, or something close to that?'

'Of course.' 80c

'You're aware, then, that when a person dies, the part of him that's visible, the body, the part that's situated in the visible

sphere – what we call a corpse, which it'd be fitting to find being dissolved, shrinking, being blown apart, well, in fact it doesn't have any of these things happen to it immediately; it stays around for a reasonably long time, and especially so if someone dies with his body in an attractive condition and at the sort of age that implies.[86] In fact when the body has shrunk and been embalmed, as with those who've been embalmed in
80d Egypt, it remains practically whole for an extraordinarily long time, and some parts of the body – bones, muscle tissue, things like that – even if they do decay are still virtually immortal. Isn't that so?'

'Yes.'

'Whereas the soul, the unseen part of us, the part that takes itself off to a second place of the same sort, noble, unalloyed, unseen, that is, to the true place of Hades,[87] to the presence of the good and wise god – which is where, god willing, my soul too must go even now: are we to suppose that *this*, this soul of ours, being such as it is and possessed of the nature we've described, is blown into pieces and perishes immediately on its separation from the body, in the way that ordinary people
80e claim? Far from it, my dear Cebes and Simmias. It's much rather like this: if a soul gets away in a purified state, dragging along nothing of the body with it, because it wasn't its willing partner in anything, but rather shunned it, and now makes good its escape gathered up together into itself, because this was what it was perpetually practising – which is nothing other,
81a is it, than doing philosophy in the correct way and in truth practising dying without complaint? *Won't* this be practising for death?'

'Yes, absolutely.'

'Being in this state, then, it's to its like, the unseen, that it departs, to what is divine, deathless and wise, where it is able to achieve the happy state it desired, now that it is rid of wandering, of mindlessness, fears, savage lusts and the other evils that beset us humans, and will in truth, as is said of the initiated, spend the rest of its time with the gods. Is that what we're to claim, Cebes, or something else?'

'Zeus! Just that,' said Cebes.

'But I imagine that if it's separated from the body in a pol- 81b
luted and unpurified state, because it was constantly with the body, paying court to it, in love with it, under its spell and that of its desires and pleasures to such a degree that it thinks nothing real unless it comes in bodily form, and something it can get hold of, see, drink, eat or have sex with; while at the same time it's acquired the habit of hating and fearing and trying to run away from what is obscure to the eyes and unseen, but open to intellect and graspable by philosophy – do you suppose that a 81c
soul in *that* sort of state will get away just by itself, unalloyed?'

'There's no way it will.'

'Rather, I imagine that when it goes off it will in fact be interspersed with elements of the bodily, grown into it through its close relationship with the body, and because of the long practice it's had of continual intimacy with it.'

'Yes, quite.'

'And, my dear Simmias, this must be a weight to carry: heavy, earthy, visible; because of it, that sort of soul must be weighed down, dragged back into the sphere of the visible, out of fear of Hades and the unseen,[88] roaming around tombs and 81d
memorials to the dead, as in the stories. There certain shadow-like phantasms of souls have actually been seen, wraiths of the kind afforded by the souls I'm now describing; the ones that have not made a clean break with the body, but that remain partly visible – and are duly seen.'

'Likely so, Socrates.'

'Likely indeed, Cebes; likely, too, that these are not at all the souls of the good but those of inferior people, which are forced to wander in such places as a penalty for the kind of life they previously lived, because it was a bad one. They continue their wandering until such time that the desire for the bodily that shadows them finally causes them to be imprisoned again in a 81e
body; and as you might expect, the prison that houses them will be marked by the very sorts of traits that they actually practised to acquire in their previous life.'

'What sorts of traits do you have in mind, Socrates?'

'For example, it's likely that those who've practised ravening

gluttony or excessive fondness for wine, and weren't on their
82a guard, pass into the kinds represented by asses and wild animals of a similar sort.'[89]

'What you say is absolutely likely.'

'Yes, and those who've put a premium on injustice in the form of tyranny and pillage will pass into those of wolves, hawks or kites; where else would we say such souls would go?'

'Without a doubt into kinds like that,' said Cebes.

'So it's clear, is it,' asked Socrates, 'where every other type of soul will go, too, according to what it's trained itself to resemble?'[90]

'It's clear,' said Cebes, 'of course.'

'Then happiest even of these souls, and the ones who go to the best place, are the people who have practised the common,
82b civic virtue,[91] the sort that they call moderation, or justice, and that has come about from habit and practice and in the absence of philosophy and intelligence.'

'How are these the happiest?'

'Because the likelihood is that they arrive back in some other civic-minded and gentle kind of creature, bees, perhaps, or wasps, or ants, or actually back again into the very same kind, the human one, and decent men are born from them.'[92]

'That's the likely thing.'

'But to the kind that *gods* belong to – for anyone to arrive at
82c that destination,[93] if he has not practised philosophy, and isn't going off in a wholly purified state, is not permitted;[94] only the lover of learning can go there. It's for that reason, Simmias and Cebes, my friends, that those who practise philosophy in the correct way resolutely keep clear of all the bodily desires instead of surrendering themselves to them, and aren't the slightest bit afraid of losing their property and falling into poverty, as ordinary people are because of their love of money; nor do they steer clear of such desires just because they're afraid of the loss of esteem and repute that comes from depravity, like those who love power and honour.'

'No, Socrates,' said Cebes, 'that wouldn't be appropriate for them.'

'Zeus! No indeed it would not,' said Socrates. 'That is why, 82d
Cebes, those who care at all about their own soul, and don't
live their lives moulding their bodies into shape, wave goodbye
to all those other types, refusing to follow the same path as
people who have no idea where they're going. Thinking them-
selves that they should not do things that are opposed to phil-
osophy, and the release and purification it offers, they take the
turning along which philosophy leads.'

'How so, Socrates?'

'I'll tell you,' Socrates replied. 'These lovers of learning rec-
ognize that before philosophy takes their soul in hand, it is 82e
simply bound fast within the body, and glued to it, so that it's
forced to investigate things[95] as if through prison bars and
never by itself, through its own resources; the outcome is that
it rolls around in total ignorance. Philosophy observes the
ingenious way in which this prison is devised, and the way in
which it relies on the prisoner's own desire, so that he'll col-
laborate enthusiastically in his own imprisonment. Well, as I
was saying, the lovers of learning recognize that, when philoso- 83a
phy takes their soul in hand in this condition, it speaks gently
and soothingly to it and attempts to set it free, demonstrating
that using our eyes to investigate things mostly deceives us, as
does using our ears or any of the sense-organs, and trying to
convince the soul to draw back from these to the extent that it
doesn't have to use them, all the time urging it to collect and
gather itself into itself and put its trust in nothing other than
itself, as it apprehends, alone and by itself, what each thing, 83b
alone and by itself, is.[96] It is not to consider as true anything
that it investigates through other means and in other things,
because that will itself be something other than what is true;
that sort of thing is an object of perception, and visible, while
what the soul sees by itself is an object of intellect, and unseen.[97]
It's because it thinks it shouldn't oppose this kind of liberation
that the soul of the truly philosophical person keeps clear so far
as it can of pleasures, desires, pains and fears, making the cal-
culation that, when someone experiences extremes of pleasure
or pain, fear or desire, the harm he's suffered from the sources
one might suppose – for example, because he's fallen ill, or 83c

spent a bit to satisfy his desires – isn't so great at all; what he does suffer is the greatest and last of all evils, and it doesn't even enter his calculations.'

'What's that, Socrates?' asked Cebes.

'That every person's soul is forced to think, even as something causes it extreme pleasure or pain, that whatever it is that most causes this is also most dependable and true, when it is neither; and these are, especially, visible things. Isn't that so?'

'Yes, certainly.'

83d 'Then it's when this is happening to it that soul is especially the prisoner of the body?'

'How's that?'

'Because each pleasure and pain fastens it to the body as if with a nail, and causes it to be of the same kind as the body,[98] insofar as it too comes to believe to be true whatever the body says is so. For I imagine that as a result of sharing the same beliefs as the body, and finding pleasure in the same things, it is forced to take on the same traits and live the same kind of life, so becoming the kind of soul that would never arrive in Hades in a pure state, but is always filled full with the body even after

83e leaving it; and so it quickly falls back again into another body, and grows in it like a seed, thus missing out on being with the divine, the pure, and the uniform.'[99]

'What you say is very true, Socrates.'

'So it's for these reasons, Cebes, that those justly called lovers of learning are orderly and courageous, not for the reasons ordinary people are;[100] or do you think ordinary people have got it right?'

84a 'I certainly don't.'

'No indeed. The soul of a philosophical person would reason in the way we've said, and wouldn't suppose, on the one hand, that it should be set free by philosophy, but on the other, even as philosophy was working its release, that it really should surrender itself to pleasures and pains, to bind it back into the body again, so bringing about the unending task of a Penelope[101] by setting about undoing what philosophy had woven. Instead it contrives for the storm of pleasures and pains to be stilled, following the lead of the reasoning that always preoccupies it,

and having its gaze fixed on what is true, divine, and not merely the subject of belief,[102] is nourished by that; it thinks it should 84b
live like this, for as long as it does live, and that when it dies and has arrived at what is akin to it, and at what is such as it is itself, it's been released from human ills. Having been brought up like that, Simmias and Cebes, there's no danger that this sort of soul will be afraid – and when it's put the things I've said into practice – that it'll be torn apart on its separation from the body, blown apart by the winds, flying in different directions, and so exiting and being no longer anywhere at all.'

When Socrates had finished speaking, there was an extended 84c
silence, and even Socrates, by the looks of it, was absorbed in the argument he'd just proposed, as were most of us; but Cebes and Simmias were talking to each other in a low voice. Socrates saw them, and asked, 'What? Surely you don't think there was anything incomplete about what we said?[103] There certainly are still many ways in which it leaves room for misgivings, and for counter-attacks, at any rate for someone who's going to go into the matter properly. Well, it may be that you're thinking about something else, in which case I'm talking to no purpose, but if there's something about what we've been saying that the two of you are unhappy with, don't hesitate to raise it and explain 84d
what it is for yourselves, if it seems to you that it would have been better put in some other way; and don't hesitate to call me in to help as well, if you think you'll be any better off with me along.'

At this, Simmias said, 'Well, then, Socrates, to tell you the truth, each of us has for some time now been egging the other on, pushing each other to ask about what's bothering us, because even as we're anxious to hear your answer, at the same time we're reluctant to make trouble, in case it causes you distress in your present misfortune.'

On hearing this, Socrates gave a gentle laugh and said, 'Dear me, Simmias! If I can't even convince you two that I don't think 84e
my present fate a misfortune, I'd certainly find it difficult to convince the rest of mankind! You're afraid that I'm in a bit more of a peevish frame of mind now than I used to be in my

previous life; it seems I look to you less of an expert seer than
85a the swans, who on sensing the approach of death outdo even their previous performances, singing more insistently and more loudly[104] than ever because of their delight at the prospect of going off to join the god whose servants they are. Because of their own fear of death human beings lie about swans too, claiming that it's distress that makes them sing their last song, in grief at their death; they don't take into account the fact that no bird sings when it's suffering from hunger or cold or any other sort of distress – not even the nightingale itself, the swallow and the hoopoe,[105] the paradigm cases, people claim, of birds' singing from grief. In fact neither these nor the swans
85b appear to me to sing out of distress; I think it's because they belong to Apollo and so have the power of prophecy, which gives them foreknowledge of the benefits of being in Hades and makes them happier on the day they die than they've ever been before. And I regard myself, too, as a fellow slave with the swans, sacred to the same god,[106] no worse than they are at using the gift of prophecy we have from our master, and leaving life in no worse humour than they do. No, so far as all that goes, you should speak out, and ask whatever you want for as long as eleven Athenian men[107] allow it.'

'Well said,' replied Simmias; 'and I'll tell you what's worry-
85c ing me, as Cebes here too will say why he doesn't accept what's been said so far. In relation to subjects like the present one, Socrates, it seems to me much as I imagine it does to you, that to know the plain truth is either impossible or something very difficult, but on the other hand I think it's only the most feeble sort of person who'd not want to test what's being said in every way possible, not giving up until he'd exhausted himself from investigating every angle. The thought will be that the outcome must be one or the other of the following: either one will learn the truth of things from someone else, or one will discover it for oneself – or else, if neither of these turns out to be possible, one must at least get hold of the best account of things that
85d human beings have come up with, the hardest to refute, and sail through life using this like a raft to ride on, taking one's courage in one's hands; unless one could find a more stable

craft to make one's way through more safely and with less risk – perhaps some divine utterance. And so now I'll not be ashamed of myself for putting my question, since you agree that I shouldn't, and I won't have cause for blaming myself later, either, for not having said what I think. The fact is, Socrates, that when I reflect either privately by myself or with Cebes on what's been said, it doesn't strike me as being quite sufficient.'

'Yes, and perhaps your view is correct, my friend,' said Soc- 85e
rates. 'Tell me in what way it wasn't sufficient.'

'In this way, it seems to me –' said Simmias, 'in that one could claim the same about an attunement and a lyre and its strings: that the attunement is something invisible, incorporeal, altogether beautiful, even divine, in the tuned lyre, while the 86a
lyre and its strings are bodies, that is, bodily things, composite, earthy, akin to the mortal. So when the lyre gets smashed, or the strings are cut through or snap, someone could use the same argument as you do, to the effect that the attunement must still be in existence and hadn't perished at all – after all, the argument would go, there'd be no way that the lyre could continue to exist as it does, with the strings broken, or that the strings could, given that they're of a mortal sort, while the attunement, which 86b
is of the same nature and the same kin as the divine and deathless, had already perished, before the mortal. The attunement itself, this person would say, *must* still be somewhere, and the wooden bits and the strings would rot before anything happened to it. In point of fact, Socrates, I think you yourself have noticed that we[108] suppose the soul to be precisely something of this sort: given that our body is in tension, as it were, and held together by hot and cold and dry and wet and things like that, 86c
our idea is that our soul is a blending or attunement of these very things, that is, when they're blended well with each other and in due proportion. Well, if the soul actually is a kind of attunement, clearly when our soul is unduly slackened or stretched by diseases or other sorts of damage, it must follow that the soul has perished in the very process, even though it's the most divine element in us – just like other attunements, whether in the sphere of actual sound or wherever they're found in the products

of craftsmen, while the bodily remains in each case stick around
86d for a long time, until they're burned or they rot down. So see what our response will be to this proposal: what if someone does claim that because it's actually a blending of the constituents of the body the soul will be the first to have perished in what we call death?'[109]

At this, with a smile, and eyes opened wide – that stare he so often used to use, Socrates said, 'Simmias has a point. If any of you is better equipped to respond to him than I am, why don't they do just that? He really does look as if he's got a hold on my argument, and not one to be brushed off. But I think before
86e Simmias gets his answer we should listen to Cebes too, see what charge *he*'ll bring against the argument, and so give ourselves time to decide what we're going to say. Then, when we've heard them both, we can either go along with them, if they seem to have hit the right note in any respect; if they don't, then it'll be the time to put the case for my side. So come on, Cebes,' said Socrates, 'and tell us: what was it that was troubling *you*?'

'I'll tell you,' said Cebes. 'The argument as a whole seems to
87a me to be just where it was before, and to be liable to the same charge that we made against it earlier. I don't retract my admission that it's been quite delightfully and, if I may say so without offence, quite "sufficiently" shown that our soul existed even before entering this human shape of ours; but that it's also still somewhere after we've died, this I don't think has been shown. As for the claim that soul isn't a stronger and more long-lasting thing than the body, here I don't agree with Simmias' objection; in all such respects it seems to me very much superior. "Then why," your argument will ask, "are you still not convinced, when you can see what is actually the weaker part continuing
87b to exist when the person has died? Don't you think the longer-lasting part must still be preserved during this time?" My reply to which is the following – just look and see if I'm making any sense; like Simmias, I need to use an analogy. It seems to me what you're saying could equally be said about an elderly weaver who's now dead: one could claim that the person hasn't actually perished but exists intact somewhere,[110] producing in evidence the fact that this is true of the cloak he was wearing,

the one he'd woven for his own use – *it*'s intact, and hasn't perished. If someone raised doubts about this, the next move would be to ask which of the two kinds of thing is the more 87c
long-lasting, a person or a cloak that's been used by a wearer; when the answer came back that it was the former kind, by far, one would conclude, using the model of your own argument, that the case was now proven – in that case, nothing's so certain as that the person is intact, given that the less long-lasting thing hasn't perished. But I imagine that in fact it's not like that – Simmias, I need your view on what I'm saying, too. The whole world would suppose anyone proposing such a thing a simpleton; after all, this weaver will have worn out many identical cloaks, weaving a new one each time, so that he will have perished after all the many worn-out ones, and presumably before 87d
only one of them, namely the last, which is hardly enough to make a person something lowlier or less robust than a cloak.[111] The same analogy, I think, could be applied to the relationship between soul and body: someone might reasonably say the very same things about soul and body as about the weaver and his cloak, that the soul is something long-lived, while the body is a weaker and shorter-lived thing, but all the same, he'd say, every single soul wears out many bodies, especially if it has a long life – for if the body is in flux, and is perishing even while the person is alive, still the soul always weaves again what's being 87e
worn out; even so, when the soul perishes it must do so actually still clothed in the final garment it's woven, so that it perishes before this one, but only this one, and with the perishing of the soul the body finally demonstrates its own true weakness by quickly rotting and departing the scene. So there's no justification yet for relying on this argument of yours, and it gives us no reassurance that when we die our soul still exists somewhere. 88a
Even if we conceded still more than this to a person putting forward the case you're proposing,[112] and granted him not only that our souls existed in the time before we were even born, but that there was nothing to prevent its being the case that when we die the souls of some of us still exist, will exist and will be born and die again many times over – because soul has the inherent strength to tolerate repeated births; if we granted all

of that, but stopped short of conceding that there were no ill effects on it at all from those many births, so that there might
88b be one of its deaths in which it perished altogether, and no one – our respondent would have to agree – would know which death this was, which separation from the body, that was bringing final destruction to the soul, since it'd be impossible for any one of us to see it coming: if all this is so, then anyone who's confident about death can't be said to have more than a mindless confidence, if he's not able to show that soul is completely deathless and imperishable. Otherwise, and again our respondent would have to agree, the person who's about to die must always fear for his soul, in case it completely perishes in *this* separation of it from the body.'

88c Well, when we'd heard what the two of them had to say, we all found ourselves in a disagreeable state of mind, as we told each other later on. We'd been decidedly convinced by the previous argument, and now here they were apparently throwing us into confusion again, and reducing us to distrust not only of the preceding arguments but of anything that might follow them; either we must be good for nothing as critics, or there was something inherently untrustworthy about the very matters we were discussing.

ECHECRATES Goodness me, Phaedo, I have every sympathy
88d for you. Having listened to you, I find myself, too, wanting to ask just this sort of question: what argument *should* we trust in after this? How very convincing the argument was that Socrates produced, and yet now it has been discredited. Because actually I'm extraordinarily taken, now as much as ever, with this proposal that our soul is a kind of attunement, and having it spelled out reminded me, so to speak, that that was already my own view. I really need another argument, starting again from first principles, as it were, to convince me that the soul of the dead person doesn't die with him. So tell me – Zeus help me! – how did Socrates pur-
88e sue the discussion? And did he too become visibly upset at all, as you say you all did, or did he gently try to come to the aid of his argument? And was his defence of it sufficient, or did it fail? Describe it all for us as faithfully as you can.

PHAEDO That I shall do. Echecrates, I'd often had cause to wonder at Socrates before, but never more than for what I observed in him on this occasion. That Socrates should have 89a
had something to say in response to Cebes and Simmias is presumably not so surprising; what I wondered at particularly about him was first of all the pleasant, kindly and respectful way he received what these young men had to say; secondly how sharply he observed the effect on us of the exchanges; and finally how effectively he soothed us, rallying us as if we were a defeated army in retreat and urging us to keep up and continue examining his case with him.

ECHECRATES How did he manage to do that?

PHAEDO I'll tell you. As it happened, I was sitting to the right of him on a stool beside his bed, and he was much higher 89b
up than I was. Stretching down with his hand he stroked my head, squeezed together the hair on my neck – he had a habit, now and then, of playing with my hair – and said, 'Tomorrow, I suppose, Phaedo, you'll be cutting off this beautiful hair of yours.'[113]

'It seems so, Socrates,' I said.

'Not if you take my advice.'

'What then?' I asked.

'Today's the day,' he replied, 'that you and I both should be cutting off our hair, at any rate if our argument dies and we can't bring it back to life. And for my part, if I were you, and 89c
my argument did get away from me, I'd swear an oath like the Argives,[114] not to let my hair grow back until I'd defeated Simmias' and Cebes' objections.

'But they say not even Heracles could fight alone against two,' I said.

'Call me in as your Iolaus,' said Socrates, 'so long as the light lasts.'[115]

'So I'm calling you in,' I said, 'but I'm not the Heracles; with us it's Iolaus calling on Heracles.'

'It'll make no difference,' he said. 'But a warning first: there's one state of mind we must guard against.'

'What's that?' I asked.

'What we must beware of,' he said, 'is becoming "misologists", 89d

hating arguments in the way "misanthropists" hate their fellow men; because' he declared 'there's nothing worse that can happen to anyone than coming to hate arguments. Actually, misology and misanthropy come about in the same way. Misanthropy creeps in as a result of placing too much trust in someone without having the knowledge required: we suppose the person to be completely genuine, sound and trustworthy, only to find a bit later that he's bad and untrustworthy, and then it happens again with someone else; when we've experienced the same thing many times over, and especially when it's with those we'd
89e have supposed our nearest and dearest, we get fed up with making so many mistakes and so end up hating everyone and supposing no one to be sound in any respect. Haven't you seen this happening?'

'Yes, certainly,' I said.

'Not a pretty thing, then,' said Socrates; 'and clearly someone like that will have been trying to handle human relationships without the knowledge he needs, of what humans are like; for I imagine that if he'd been doing it on the basis of a proper understanding, he would have supposed things to be as
90a they really are, with the very good and the very bad forming a small minority, and the majority in the middle between good and bad.'

'What do you mean?' I asked.

'It's the same as with very small and very large objects,' he said; 'can you think of anything rarer than to find an extremely large or extremely small man, or dog, or anything else? Or try it with quick, slow, ugly, beautiful, pale, dark: haven't you noticed that examples at the extreme points in all such cases are rare and in the minority, while examples in between are plentiful and in the majority?'

'Yes, certainly,' I said.

90b 'Then it's your view', said Socrates, 'that if a competition for badness were proposed those out in front would be quite few in number?'

'That's likely,' I replied.

'Yes indeed,' said Socrates, 'though in fact arguments aren't like human beings in that respect;[116] I was merely following

your lead just now. The similarity is just that when someone trusts in the truth of an argument without having the necessary expertise, in arguments, and a bit later on it looks false to him (sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't); then the same thing happens with another, and another – well, as you'll know, especially if it's a question of someone who's spent all his time on 90c
constructing opposing arguments,[117] he'll end up thinking he's become very wise, because unlike anyone else he's understood that there is nothing whatever that's sound, or stable, in things, and nothing that's sound or stable in arguments either. Everything there is in the world is simply moving this way and that, up and down like the currents in the Euripus, and doesn't stop still anywhere for any period of time.'[118]

'You're absolutely right,' I said.

'Well, then, Phaedo,' said Socrates, 'wouldn't it be a quite pitiable thing if there really were some true and stable argument that one could get hold of, and yet because a person 90d
mixed with the sorts of arguments that now seem true, now false, he failed to blame himself, and his own lack of expertise, and instead eased his distress by happily shifting the blame from himself to arguments, thus living out the rest of his life not only hating and abusing arguments but deprived of the truth of things and of knowledge about them?'

'Zeus! It would indeed be a pitiable thing,' I said.

'Then our first priority,' Socrates said, 'must be to beware of allowing the thought to creep into our soul that there's prob- 90e
ably nothing sound in any argument; we must much rather suppose that it's ourselves that are not yet in a sound condition, and that we must soldier on, eager to be sound – you, Phaedo, and the others here, for the sake of the rest of your lives as well as for the present moment, and I for the sake of my impending 91a
death itself, insofar as I'm presently in danger of wanting to win the argument, like people of no education, instead of showing a properly philosophical attitude towards it.[119] Whenever they're disputing on some subject or other, the concern of these individuals is only that the theses they themselves have proposed should seem good to their audience; they don't care how the things they're talking about actually are. I think the only

difference, at the present moment, between me and them is that it's not my concern, except incidentally, whether what I'm saying should seem true to my audience, but rather that it should
91b as much as possible seem so to *me*. My reasoning is this, my dear friend (see how determined I am to get the advantage!):[120] if what I'm saying is actually true, then it's a fine thing to be convinced about it, and if there's nothing, after all, for the person who's died, then at any rate for just this short time before my own death I'll spare my audience the unpleasantness of hearing me moan about it, and this silliness of mine won't persist with me, which would be a bad thing, but will shortly perish with me. So much, then, Simmias and Cebes,' said Socrates, 'for my preparations for advancing against your argument; as
91c for you, if you'll take my advice, you'll pay little attention to Socrates and much more to the truth: if I do seem to be saying anything that's true, agree with me, but if not resist me with all the arguments at your disposal. Take care that in my enthusiasm I don't deceive both myself and you, and that I don't go off like a bee leaving my sting behind.

'So now let's get going. Start by reminding me of what you were saying, if at any point I'm clearly not remembering. Simmias here, I think, is doubtful because he's afraid that, despite
91d being something both more divine and more beautiful than the body, the soul may still perish before it, being the same kind of thing as an attunement; whereas Cebes, despite seeming to agree with me that soul was something longer-lasting than body, thought no one could be sure that the soul wouldn't wear out many bodies, many times over, and then perish itself, leaving behind its last body – so that death itself would be just this perishing of the soul, in so far as the body is anyway subject to constant and repeated perishing. These are the objections, Simmias and Cebes, aren't they, that we need to look at?'

91e The pair of them agreed.

'So', asked Socrates, 'are you refusing to accept all the previous arguments, or do you accept some and not others?'

'We accept some,' they said, 'but not others.'

'What, then,' Socrates said, 'do you say about the argument in which we claimed that learning was recollection, and that it

must necessarily follow from this that the soul exists, somewhere else, before we do, that is, before being imprisoned in the body?' 92a

'I for one,' said Cebes, 'was wonderfully convinced by the argument at the time, and I stick by it now as I do no other.'

'Yes,' said Simmias, 'that's my position too, and I'd be quite amazed if I ever changed my mind about this one.'

Socrates replied, 'But you'll have to change your mind about it, my Theban friend, if you're going to go on supposing that an attunement is a composite thing, and that soul is a kind of attunement, composed from the constituents of the body in tension; I don't suppose you'll accept it from yourself to say 92b that a harmony could be there, already put together, before the very things it had to be put together from – or will you?'

'Not at all, Socrates,' said Simmias.

'Well,' said Socrates, 'do you see that that's just what you will be saying, when you assert that the soul exists even before it enters the shape of a human, and a body, and at the same time that it exists itself by being composed out of things that don't yet exist? An attunement certainly isn't the sort of thing you're comparing it to, because the lyre and its strings, and the sounds they make, come into being beforehand, still without 92c any tuning, and the attunement is the last thing to be put together and indeed the first thing to perish. So how will this theory of yours be in tune with the other one?'

'It won't be,' said Simmias.

'Yet if there's any theory at all that ought to be in tune,' Socrates replied, 'it's one about attunement.'

'Yes, it ought,' said Simmias.

'Well, this one of yours is out of tune,' Socrates said. 'See which of the two positions you prefer: that learning is recollection, or that soul is attunement?'

'The first, by far, Socrates,' said Simmias. 'The second one 92d came to me without proof, on the basis of a certain likelihood and plausibility, which is why ordinary people too believe in it; but I'm aware that theories which rely for their proofs on mere likelihoods are impostors, and that, if you're not thoroughly on your guard against them, they'll deceive you, whether in geometry or anywhere else. The theory about recollection and

learning was different; that was put forward on the basis of a hypothesis worthy of acceptance – I think we said that it was equally the case that our soul exists before coming into a body
92e and that the set of things[121] that bears the name "what is" exists by itself. *That* hypothesis,[122] I persuade myself, I've accepted with sufficient reason, and correctly. In which case it seems I mustn't put up with either myself or anyone else saying that soul is an attunement.'

'And what about this consideration, Simmias?' asked Socra-
93a tes. 'Do you think an attunement or any other composite object has the capacity to be in a different state from that of the elements it's composed from?'

'Not at all.'

'Nor again can it act, or be acted upon, in any way that's different from the way its elements are acting or being acted upon.'

Simmias agreed.

'In that case an attunement certainly isn't the sort of thing that has the capacity to *direct* the things it's put together from; it will follow them.'

Simmias assented.

'In that case there's no chance that an attunement will move in an opposite direction or sound or do anything else that's opposed to its own elements?'

'No chance.'

'Another thing: isn't it in the nature of any attunement to be an attunement in just the way it's been tuned?'

'I don't follow you.'

'Well,' said Socrates, 'isn't it the case that if it's been tuned
93b more and to a greater extent, if that's actually possible, it'll be more of an attunement and a greater attunement, and if it's been tuned less and to a lesser extent, it'll be less of an attunement and a lesser one?'[123]

'Yes, certainly.'

'Well, then: is this the case with the soul, so that one soul can be even the slightest bit more this very thing, soul, than another, and to a greater extent soul – or less and to a lesser extent?'

'There's no way that could be.'

'Come on, then, for goodness' sake! One soul is said to have intelligence and virtue, and to be good, another to lack intelligence and virtue and be bad? And these things are not only 93c
what people say but actually true?'

'Yes, true.'

'Then if we go back to those who put forward the hypothesis of soul as attunement, what will any of them say these things are that are found in souls – goodness and badness? That they're in turn some further attunement and lack of attunement? Will they say that the good one has been tuned, and has within itself, namely in the attunement it is, another attunement, while the other is itself untuned and doesn't have another attunement in itself?'

'I can't say myself,' said Simmias; 'but clearly the person who proposed the hypothesis would say something like that.'

'But it's already agreed', said Socrates, 'that one soul can't in 93d
any way be more, or less, of a soul than another, and this means we've agreed that one attunement can't in any way be more of or to a greater extent or less of or to a lesser extent an attunement than another. Isn't that so?'

'Yes, certainly.'

'But we've also agreed that what isn't in any way more of an attunement or less of one isn't either more tuned or less tuned; right?'

'Right.'

'And an attunement that's neither more nor less tuned – can this have more or less of a share in attunement, or will its share be equal?'

'Equal.'

'Then, given that no one soul is in any way more or less this very thing, soul, than any other, then it hasn't been tuned more 93e
or tuned less either.'

'That's so.'

'But if that's how soul is, it wouldn't have any greater share in lack of tuning or attunement?'

'No indeed.'

'And again, if that's how soul is, would any one soul have any greater share in badness or goodness than any another,

given that badness is lack of tuning, goodness a matter of attunement?'

'No soul would have any greater share.'

94a 'Or rather, Simmias, I think, if we reason it out correctly, no soul will share in badness at all, if in fact soul is attunement: attunement, presumably being entirely this very thing, attunement, would never have any share in lack of tuning.'

'No indeed.'

'So neither, presumably, will soul share in badness, being entirely soul.'

'How could it, given what we've already said?'

'The result we get from this line of argument, then, is that all souls, of all living creatures, are similarly good, if in fact it's the nature of souls to be similarly this very thing, souls.'

'It seems so to me, Socrates,' said Simmias.

'And do you think this is an *acceptable* result?' asked Socra-
94b tes. 'Do you think the argument would have ended up like this if the hypothesis that soul is attunement were correct?'

'Not at all,' said Simmias.

'And here's another question,' said Socrates: 'of all the aspects of a human being, do you say that any has a directive role except soul, especially if it's a wise soul?'

'I do not.'

'Do you say it directs in agreement with bodily events,[124] or also in opposition to them?What I'm asking, for example, is this – when there's heat present in the body, and thirst, can the soul pull in the opposite direction, towards not drinking instead of drinking, and towards not eating when hunger is present? I
94c imagine there are countless other cases where the soul opposes bodily tendencies; isn't that so?'

'Yes, quite certainly.'

'Well, again, didn't we agree in the course of our discussion that, if soul were attunement, it would never sing tunes that were opposed to the tightenings, relaxations, pluckings, or whatever other affections it might be of the very things out of which it was composed; rather it would follow them, and never try to lead them?'

'That's what we agreed,' said Simmias, 'of course.'

'And in point of fact don't we observe it working to exactly the opposite effect? It acts as leader to all those things that it's alleged to be made up from, opposes them in practically everything throughout life and dominates them in all the ways it can, punishing some of them more harshly, making them suffer through physical exercise or medical intervention, while treating others more gently, sometimes using threats, sometimes remonstrations, talking things over with desires, fits of anger or fears as one separate thing addressing another? It's a bit like that scene in Homer's *Odyssey*, where he says of Odysseus that 94d

> He struck his chest, and his heart he scolded thus:
> "Bear up, my heart! Much worse you have endured."[125] 94e

Do you think Homer composed these lines in the belief that the soul was an attunement, and the sort of thing to be driven by bodily events, or rather because he believed it to be the sort of thing to drive and dominate these, being much too divine a thing to be compared with an attunement?'

'Zeus, Socrates! That's certainly how it seems to me.'

'In that case, best of men, there's nothing to recommend our saying that soul is a kind of attunement; if we do that, it seems, we wouldn't be in agreement either with the divine poet Homer or with ourselves.'[126] 95a

'That's so,' said Simmias.

'So far so good,' Socrates went on. 'The matter of the Theban Harmonia could be said, perhaps, to have turned out in a moderately propitious way for us; what, then' – here Socrates turned to Cebes – 'about the matter of Cadmus?[127] How shall we make that similarly propitious to us? What argument shall we use?'

'It seems to me,' said Cebes, 'that you'll find one, to judge by this wonderfully unexpected argument you've produced against attunement. As Simmias was expressing his worries, I was myself very much wondering whether anyone would be able at all to handle his argument; so it seemed to me quite extraordinary that it didn't manage to withstand even the first onset of 95b

your own argument. So I wouldn't be surprised if the argument of Cadmus didn't meet with exactly the same fate.'

'Mind what you're saying,' said Socrates, 'there's a good man, in case some malign presence upsets the argument that's coming. Well, that's for the god to decide; as for us, let's come to close quarters in true Homeric fashion and test whether there really is something in what you say. I think the nub of what you're looking for is this: you think our soul needs to be
95c proved to be imperishable and immortal, or else the confident belief of a certain philosophical person who's about to die, that he'll fare better in Hades than if he were ending a different kind of life, will be just mindless and foolish. You're saying that it doesn't help to show that the soul is something strong and god-like, which existed even before we were born as human beings; all that might be so, but it could still indicate, not that the soul is immortal, but rather that it's something long-lasting, which perhaps pre-existed for goodness knows how long and so used
95d to know and do all sorts of things – even so, none of that would make it any more *immortal*. As a matter of fact, its entry into a human body is – you said – the starting-point of its own perishing, like the onset of a disease, after which it labours its way[128] through this life, finally perishing in what we call death. Your claim is that it makes no difference whether a soul enters a body just once or many times over, so far at least as our individual fears are concerned; the person who doesn't know, and can't even provide an argument for supposing, that the soul is
95e something immortal, *ought* to be afraid, if he has a mind at all. I think that's the sort of thing you're saying, Cebes; I'm deliberately rehearsing it more than once in case there's anything we might miss, and in case there's anything you want to add or take away.'

Cebes replied, 'No, there's nothing I need either to take away or add at present; my objection is as you state it.'

At this juncture Socrates paused for a considerable time to think something through in his mind; after which he said, 'Cebes, this is no mean thing you're asking; it means an inves-
96a tigation of the reason behind coming-into-being and perishing in general.[129] In this connection, I'll describe my own history

for you, if you're willing for me to do that; the next step will be for you to use it, if it contains anything you can use, to help you convince us about your own position.'[130]

'Yes,' said Cebes, 'indeed I am willing.'

'Then here's my story for you. In my youth, Cebes,' Socrates began, 'I conceived an extraordinary passion for that sort of wisdom they call "inquiry into nature": it seemed to me a staggering achievement, to know the reasons for each thing – why it comes into being, why it perishes, why it exists. I used con- 96b
stantly to shift back and forth, starting with questions like these: "Is it when the hot and the cold are affected by a sort of putrefaction, as some people used to say,[131] that living creatures develop and grow? Is it blood that we think with, or air, or fire?[132] Or is it none of these, but rather the brain that provides us with the sensations of hearing and seeing and smelling, as a source for memory and judgement, and is it then from memory and judgement, when the latter has settled down, that knowledge comes about?"[133] And again, when I thought about the ways these things perish, and about what happens in the heavens 96c
or on the earth, I finally concluded that there was no creature less naturally gifted for this sort of investigation than I was. To give you an indication, I and everybody else used to think there were things I knew perfectly well, but this new method of inquiry so blinded me that on a whole range of subjects I unlearned even things that I thought before that I knew. So with the question why a human being gets bigger: I used to think anyone knew it was because it eats and drinks – whenever flesh was added to flesh out of the food, bone to bone, and similarly 96d
everything else had added to it what belonged to it, then what was small in bulk came to be large, and thus a small human being became a big one.[134] That was what I thought before, and quite reasonably, don't you think?'

'Yes, I do,' said Cebes.

'Well, think about these further examples. I used to think it was enough to take the view that someone was bigger if a big person stood next to a small one and looked bigger just by 96e
virtue of his head, and similarly with two horses; even more clearly, it seemed to me that ten was more numerous than eight

because two were there in the ten in addition to the eight, and two cubits bigger than one because they exceeded it by half.'

'So what do you think about such cases now?' asked Cebes.

'That I'm a long way, Zeus knows,' said Socrates, 'from supposing that in these things I know the reason for anything, seeing that I won't accept it from myself even that when someone adds one to one, either the one to which the second was added has become two, or the one that was added, or that the one
97a that was added *and* the one it was added to become two because of their addition to each other; I'm amazed at the idea that when each of them was apart from the other, each was actually one, and they weren't then two, but when they're juxtaposed, they do then become two, just for the reason that they've been put close to each other and married up. Nor, if someone divides one, am I any longer able to believe that *that* has now become the reason for two's coming into being, namely division, because
97b then the reason for two's coming to be turns out to be opposite to the previous one: in that case it was because the ones were brought close together and added to each other, and now it's because they're being drawn apart and separated from one another. Equally, I can't persuade myself any longer that I know why one comes into being – or, in short, why anything comes into being, or perishes, or exists, if I employ this kind of inquiry. Instead I make up some other confused jumble of a method of my own, and I have no inclination at all towards this other one.

'However there was a day when I heard someone reading
97c from a book he said was by Anaxagoras, and proclaiming that it was actually mind that ordered things and was the reason for everything. Now *that* was the kind of reason I was happy to have; it seemed to me it was a good thing, somehow or other, that mind should be the reason for all things, and I supposed that, if this was so, mind would be ordering everything, as mind would, by disposing it in the way that was best – so that then, if anyone wanted to discover the reason for any particular thing and how it comes into being or perishes or exists, what he would have to do would be to discover one thing about it,
97d namely how it's best for it either to be or to do or to have done

to it anything else whatsoever. I imagined, following this train of thought, that the only line of inquiry a human investigator would need to follow, whether about this very subject, human beings, or about anything else, would be to ask what was best for the thing in question – its highest good; although I also thought such an investigator would have to know what was worse than the best, too, since both were subjects of one and the same knowledge.[135] Well, given that I was reasoning this way, I was delighted to suppose I'd found someone to teach me about the reason for things who was of a mind with myself: Anaxagoras. I happily supposed that he'd begin by informing me whether the earth was flat or rounded, and that when he'd 97e
done that he'd go on to expound the reason why it had to be like that, giving it as what was *better* for it: it was just better that it should be like that. Then again, if he declared the earth to be in the middle of the universe, I imagined he'd similarly go on to expound on how it was better for it to be in the middle; 98a
and, if he'd show me this, I was prepared to give up hankering after any other kind of reason. And what's more I was prepared to discover the same about the sun, the moon, and the other stars,[136] about their relative speeds, their turnings, and everything else that happens to them, and how it was better that each of them does and has done to it whatever it may be. I never for a moment supposed, seeing that he was claiming that these things were ordered by mind, that he'd bring in any other sort of reason for them except that it was best for them to be as they are; and so I thought that as he assigned the reason both 98b
to each thing separately and to everything together he would explain not just the best for each but the common good for all. I wouldn't have abandoned my hopes even for a tidy sum; my commitment was total – grabbing the books, I read them as quickly as I could, so that I'd lose no time in being enlightened about what was best and what was worse.[137]

'It was from extraordinarily high hopes, then, my friend, that I went hurtling down. As I continue my reading, I behold a man who makes no use of his mind, and doesn't charge it with any part in the ordering of things, citing air and ether and 98c
water and a whole collection of other equally bizarre things

instead.[138] It seemed to me that his position was very much as if someone started by saying "Everything Socrates does, he does mindfully", and then, when he set out to give the reasons for all the various things I do, he said first of all that the reason I'm sitting here now is that my body is composed of bones and sinews, and that the bones are hard and separated from each
98d other by joints, while the sinews – along with the fleshy parts, and the skin that holds everything together – cover the bones, and have the capacity to tighten and slacken; so, with the bones suspended in their sockets, the sinews slacken and tighten and somehow make me able to bend my legs as I'm doing now – and *that*'s the reason why I'm sitting here with my legs bent as they are. The reasons he'd give in explaining my conversation with you would be more of the same, putting it down to things like articulate sound, air, hearing, and countless more of them,
98e all the time omitting to mention the true reasons, namely that, since the Athenians decided it was better to condemn me, for that very reason *I*'ve decided that it's the better thing for me to sit here, and more just for me to stay and submit to whatever penalty they impose on me; since I swear to you by the Dog
99a these sinews and bones of mine would long since have been – well, I think they would – in the vicinity of Megara or Boeotia, carried along by what appeared best to them,[139] if I didn't think it more just, and finer, to submit to the city and whatever penalty she imposes than to escape and become a fugitive. It's just too bizarre to call such things "reasons". True, unless I had such things – bones, sinews, and all the other bits of me – I wouldn't be able to do the things I decide to do; but to say that I do what I do because of these things, and mindfully at that,
99b and not by my choice of what is best, would be an extremely lazy way to talk. How absurd, not to be able to tell the two things apart: the real reason for something, and that without which the reason wouldn't ever be able to operate as a reason at all! It's the second thing ordinary people appear to me to be latching on to as they grope around in the dark,[140] calling it a "reason" when the name actually belongs to something else. That's why one person puts a whirl round the earth and makes it stay in place under the influence of the heavens, while someone

else puts air under it as a base, treating it like some kind of flat kneading-trough; as for the capacity of earth or anything else to 99c
be placed here and now in the best possible way for it to be placed, *that* they don't look for, and neither do they think it has any special power – instead, they suppose that some day they'll discover an Atlas superior to this one, stronger, more divine and more able to hold everything together.[141] That what truly binds and holds things together is the good and the binding, that they don't believe at all. So if there's anyone who can teach me exactly how it is with *my* sort of reason, I'd be overjoyed to become his pupil. But since, as things are, that wasn't offered to me,[142] and I haven't either been able to discover it for myself or learn about it from anybody else – well,' Socrates concluded, 'would you like 99d
me to give you a display of how I've engaged in my "second sailing"[143] in search of the reason for things, Cebes?'

'Yes,' replied Cebes, 'I'd like that enormously.'

'Well,' said Socrates, 'after this it seemed to me that, since I'd failed in my inquiry into things, I should beware of having happen to me what happens to people who try to observe the sun in eclipse directly – I believe they ruin their eyes, some of them, if they do that rather than examining its image in 99e
water or some similar medium. That was the kind of thing I had in mind; I feared my soul could be completely blinded[144] by my looking directly at things with my eyes, or trying to grasp them with any of my other senses. What I decided was that I must resort to *reasoned accounts*, and look into the truth of things in the world in them.[145] Perhaps the analogy is in one 100a
respect misleading: in fact I don't at all concede that someone who examines things in the medium I'm proposing is any more examining them in images than someone who examines them as they actually are in front of us.[146] But in any case this was my starting-point: hypothesizing on each occasion whatever account I judge to have the most explanatory power, I posit as true whatever seems to me to be in tune with this, whether about the reasons for things or about anything else, and as untrue whatever is not in tune with it.[147] But I'd like to put what I have in mind more clearly – I think at the moment you're not getting the point.'

'Zeus! No,' said Cebes, 'not really.'

100b 'Actually, the way I'm talking now is nothing new; it's the same old things that I'm always talking about, whenever I get the chance, and that I've not stopped talking about in the preceding discussion.[148] My aim is to try to show you the kind of reasons that engage me, and for that purpose I'm going to go back to those much-talked-about entities of ours – starting from them, and hypothesizing that there's something that's beautiful and nothing but beautiful, in and by itself, and similarly with good, big, and all the rest. If you grant me these, and agree that they exist, my hope is, starting from them, to show you the reason for things and establish that the soul is something immortal.'[149]

100c 'Well,' said Cebes, 'I certainly do grant you them, so I don't mind how quickly you show me.'

'Then,' said Socrates, 'see whether you agree with me about what comes next. It appears to me that, if there is anything that's beautiful besides the beautiful itself, it's not beautiful because of anything except the fact that it shares in that other beautiful thing; and I give a similar account in every case. Do you go along with reasons of that kind?'

'Yes, I do,' said Cebes.

'Well then,' replied Socrates, 'if we're agreed about that, I no longer understand, nor am I able to recognize, these other wise

100d "reasons": if anyone tries to tell me why something is beautiful, no matter what, by saying it's because it has a bright colour, or a particular shape, or anything of that kind, I wave goodbye to everything else – because all those other "reasons" confuse me – and I hold this one thought to myself, in my plain, artless and probably simple-minded way, that nothing else at all makes the something in question beautiful except that other beautiful thing, whether by its presence in it, or by its association with it, or in whatever way or manner it has come to be added to it;[150] which of these it is I don't insist on, but I do insist that all beautiful things are beautiful *by virtue of the beautiful*. This seems to me the safest answer to give, whether

100e to myself or anyone else, and as I cling to this I think to myself, "This way I'll never fall; it's a safe answer, to give both to myself

and to anyone else, that beautiful things come to be beautiful by virtue of the beautiful." Don't you think so too?'

'I do.'

'In that case big things too are big and bigger things bigger by virtue of bigness, smaller things smaller by virtue of smallness?'

'Yes.'

'You wouldn't accept it yourself, then, if someone were to say that one person was bigger than another by virtue of his head,[151] and the smaller one smaller by this same thing; rather, 101a
you'd solemnly protest that whatever anyone else says, *you*'re not saying anything except that everything bigger than something is bigger by virtue of bigness, and not anything else, and that it's because of this that it's bigger, namely bigness, while the smaller thing is smaller by virtue of smallness and nothing else, and it's because of this, smallness, that it's smaller. I imagine you'd be afraid, if you said people were bigger or smaller "by a head", that you'd encounter some opposing argument – first of all, the bigger would be bigger and the smaller smaller by virtue of the same thing, and then the bigger person would be bigger by virtue of something – the head – which was actually small; and wouldn't that be unnatural, if someone was big by virtue 101b
of something small? Wouldn't that sort of thing frighten you?'

Cebes laughed and said 'Yes, it would!'[152]

'Then', said Socrates, 'you'd be afraid to say that ten was more numerous than eight by virtue of two, and that that was the reason for its being more, rather than by virtue of numerousness, and because of numerousness? And that two cubits were bigger than one by virtue of a half rather than by virtue of bigness? I imagine there'd be the same fear.'

'Yes, certainly,' said Cebes.

'What about saying that addition was the reason for two's coming into being, when one was added to one, or division 101c
when it was divided? You'd be wary of saying that too, wouldn't you, and you'd shout out loud that you know of no other way in which anything comes into being except by having come to share in the appropriate essence of whatever it is that each does come to share in.[153] As for the present cases, you'd say you have

no other reason to offer for two's coming into being except its sharing in twoness, that things that are going to be two must come to share in this, that anything that's going to be one must share in oneness – and you'll wave goodbye to those divisions and additions and other such subtleties, leaving them as answers
101d to be given by people wiser than yourself. As for you, fearful of your own shadow, as they say, and of your lack of experience, you'd hold on to the safety that's to be found in the hypothesis and answer accordingly.[154] Then, if someone held on to the hypothesis itself, you'd dismiss him and refuse to answer until you'd examined its consequences to see if they were in tune with each other, or out of tune; and when you had to give a reasoned account of the hypothesis itself, you'd do it in the same way, that is, by positing another hypothesis, whichever appeared best of those above the first one, until you arrived at
101e something sufficient for the purpose. Right? And you wouldn't muddle everything up together as the antilogicians do, by talking about your starting-point and its consequences as if there were no difference between them – that is, if you wanted to find the truth about anything. That sort probably don't give a moment's thought to finding things out, or care about it; their wisdom allows them to stir everything together and still be pleased with themselves; but you, I think, if you're of a philo-
102a sophical sort, will approach things in the way I describe.'[155]

'Absolutely true,' said Simmias and Cebes in unison.

ECHECRATES By Zeus, Phaedo! They'd every reason to say so. It seems to me there was an extraordinary clarity[156] about what the man said; even someone of little brain would have to agree.

PHAEDO Yes, absolutely, Echecrates; it seemed like that to everybody who was there, too.

ECHECRATES And to all of us who weren't there but are hearing it now. But how did the discussion go after that?

PHAEDO I think, when there was assent to those last points,
102b and it was agreed both that each of the forms exists,[157] and that other things share in them and get their names from them, Socrates next asked, 'Well, if you say this is how things are, when you assert that Simmias is bigger than Socrates, but smaller

than Phaedo, you'll be saying, won't you, that at that moment both things are in Simmias – both bigness and smallness?'

'That's right.'

'But now do you agree,' said Socrates, 'that when we say "Simmias overtops Socrates", we aren't quite expressing things 102c
as they actually are? Because I don't imagine you think that it belongs to Simmias' nature to overtop Socrates, that is, that he does so by virtue of being Simmias – it's rather by virtue of the bigness that he happens to have; nor again are you supposing that he overtops Socrates because Socrates is Socrates, but because Socrates has smallness as against Simmias' bigness?'

'True.'

'Nor, again, that Simmias is overtopped by Phaedo by virtue of the fact that Phaedo is Phaedo, but because Phaedo has bigness as against Simmias' smallness?'

'That's so.'

'This, then, is how Simmias gets to be called both small and big, namely because he's in the middle between the other two, submitting his smallness to be overtopped by the bigness of the 102d
one and offering his bigness to overtop the smallness of the other.' At that point he smiled: 'It looks as if I'm going to be talking like a handbook.[158] Still, at least it is as I say, I think.'

Simmias agreed.

'The reason I'm saying all this is because I want you to share my view of the matter: it appears to me that it's not just bigness itself that won't consent ever to be both big and small; the bigness in us won't ever let in the small either, and it won't consent to be overtopped. Rather, I think, one of two things must happen: either it retreats and gets out of the way when its opposite, 102e
the small, advances on it, or else when the enemy has completed its advance, the bigness will already have perished – it won't consent to put up with smallness, and let smallness in, because that would mean its being other than it was. Think of my case: I've put up with smallness and let it in, and I'm still who I am, this same person, only small; but it's too much for bigness, being what it is,[159] big, to be small. In the same way the small in us won't consent ever to become, or to be, big, and neither, if they're still to be what they were, will any other of

103a the opposites consent to becoming and being their opposites, at the same time as being themselves. No, at the advance of their opposites, either they go off or they perish.'

'That's exactly how it appears to me,' said Cebes.

When he heard Cebes, one of those present – I don't exactly remember who it was – interjected: 'Wait a minute! Earlier on in the discussion, weren't you agreeing exactly the opposite of what you're now saying, namely that the bigger comes from the smaller and the smaller from the bigger, and indeed that coming-to-be, for opposites, was simply this, from opposites? And now the claim seems to me to be that this couldn't ever happen.'

Socrates turned his head towards the speaker and heard him
103b out. 'Manfully recalled,' he said, 'but you're not seeing the difference between what we're now saying and what we were saying then. What we were saying then was that opposite things came to be from their opposites, whereas we're saying now just that the opposite itself couldn't ever become opposite *to* itself, whether it's that opposite in us or its counterpart in nature.[160] To put it another way, my friend, then we were talking about things characterized by the opposites, and attaching to them the names belonging to those opposites, but now we're talking about the opposites themselves, by virtue of whose presence in
103c them the other things get their names; it's those opposites themselves that we're saying wouldn't ever consent to coming to be each other.' Socrates then looked at Cebes: 'I don't suppose any of what he said troubled you too?'

'No,' said Cebes, 'I'm not making any objections this time, though I'm not denying that there are lots of things that are troubling me.'

'We're in agreement, in that case,' Socrates went on, 'about this much, without any ifs and buts: an opposite will never be opposite to itself.'

'Completely in agreement,' said Cebes.

'Then see if you'll agree with me about this further point,' said Socrates. 'Do you recognize something you call hot, and something you call cold?'

'I do.'

'Are they what you call snow and fire?'

'Zeus! No, certainly not.' 103d

'The hot is something different from fire, the cold something different from snow?'

'Yes.'

'But this much I think you do accept, because it's the kind of thing we were saying before: snow, being snow, after having let in the hot, will never be any longer what it was, namely snow, and also something hot; when the hot advances on it, it'll either get out of the way or perish.'

'Yes, certainly.'

'And likewise you accept that when cold advances, fire will either get away or perish; it'll be too much for it ever to let in coldness and still be what it was, fire, and cold as well.'

'True,' said Cebes. 103e

'So the position with respect to some things like this is such that not only is the form itself entitled to its name for all time, but so too, for as long as it exists, is something else – something which, while not being the form, always has the character of the form. Here's an example that will probably make what I'm saying a bit clearer: the odd must, I imagine, always enjoy this name that we're now giving it – right?'

'Yes, certainly.'

'Is it the only thing there is that we call the odd – this is my question – or is there something else as well, which isn't what 104a the odd is, but which all the same, in addition to its own name, has also to be called odd, on a permanent basis, because it's by nature such as never to be separated from the odd? What I'm talking about is the sort of thing that happens to *three*,[161] to take just one example among many. Think about three: it's the case, isn't it, that it always has to have both its own name attached to it and that of the odd, even though the odd isn't what three is? Despite that, not just three but five and half of the whole series of numbers naturally have this feature, that 104b even while they're not what the odd is, each of them is always odd; and similarly two, four and the whole other half of the number series is always even despite not being what the even is. Do you go along with that or not?'

'Of course,' said Cebes.

'See here, then, what I'm trying to show you,' said Socrates. 'The point is this: it's not just the opposites that clearly don't let one another into themselves; there's also another set of things – things that aren't themselves opposites but always have the opposites – that don't look as if they'll let in whichever form it is[162] that's opposite to the one in them, instead either perishing
104c or getting out of the way as it advances. Or shall we not say that three will die or suffer any fate rather than putting up with becoming even while still being three?'

'Yes, indeed we shall,' said Cebes.

'Nor again', said Socrates, 'is two opposite to three.'

'No indeed.'

'So it isn't just the opposite forms[163] that don't withstand each other's advance, but there are certain other things that won't withstand the advance of opposites.'

'Very true,' said Cebes.

'So', asked Socrates, 'are you happy for us to try, if we can, to determine what sorts of things these are?'

'Yes, certainly.'

104d 'Might they be things that are compelled by whatever occupies them[164] not only to have its own character, by itself, but always to have that of some opposite?'

'What do you mean?'

'What we were saying just now. I imagine you recognize that whatever the character of three occupies must not only be three but odd as well.'[165]

'Yes, certainly.'

'Well, then, we're saying, the character opposite to the one that has this effect will never come to belong to the sort of thing in question.'[166]

'No, never.'

'And what had this effect was the character of the odd?'

'Yes.'

'And the character of the even is the opposite of this?'

'Yes.'

104e 'In that case the character of the even will never come to belong to the three.'[167]

'No, it won't.'

'The three, then, has no share in the even.'

'None.'

'In that case the three is un-even.'

'Yes.'

'So what I said we needed to identify, namely what sorts of things they are that, while not actually being opposite to some opposite, will nevertheless not let in that opposite – just as now the three, while not being opposite to the even, will no less for that refuse to let it in, because three always brings with it the opposite of even, as the two does the opposite of the odd, fire the 105a opposite of the cold, and so on and so forth – well, see if you'll identify what we want by saying that not only does opposite not let in opposite, but neither will what brings with it some opposite to the thing that it, itself, comes to belong to; that is, the thing bringing the opposite with it will itself never let in the opposite of the opposite it's bringing with it. Let me run through it again, because it'll be no bad thing to hear it more than once: five won't let in the character of the even, nor ten, its double, that of the odd. Of course the double has its own opposite, too, but even so it won't let in the character of the odd, any more than the 105b half-as-much-again, and the whole series of the halves, or for that matter the series of the thirds, and so on, will let in the character of the whole[168] – if you're following me, and if you agree.'

'I'm quite emphatically in agreement,' said Cebes, 'and I am following.'

'Then go over it for me once more from the beginning,' said Socrates; 'and don't answer me by giving me back whatever it is I'm asking you about,[169] but rather by following the sort of example I've just been giving you. What I'm talking about is another kind of answer besides the one I was talking about before, and calling "safe", because I now espy another sort of "safety" as a result of what we were saying just now. Suppose you were to ask me what it is in the presence of which in the body a thing is hot: I won't give you the safe but ignorant 105c answer "it's the presence of heat", but a cleverer answer[170] of the sort that has emerged from our present discussion, "it's the presence of *fire*"; if you ask me what it is in the presence of

which in the body something will be sick, I won't say "sickness", but rather "fever"; if you ask in the presence of what, in a number, will that number be odd, I'll not say "oddness", but "oneness";[171] and similarly in every other case. See if you've now got a firm enough hold on what I'm trying to say.'

'Quite firm enough,' said Cebes.

'Then answer me this,' said Socrates: 'what is it in the presence of which, in a body, that body will be alive?'

'A body that has soul in it,' said Cebes.

105d 'So is that always the case?'

'Of course,' said Cebes.

'In that case, whatever body soul itself occupies, it always comes bringing aliveness to that body?'

'It does indeed,' said Cebes.

'And is there something that's opposite to aliveness, or does it have no opposite?'

'It has one,' said Cebes.

'What is it?'

'Deadness.'

'Well then, given what's agreed between us from before, soul will never, ever, let in to itself what's opposite to the opposite that it, itself, always brings with it?'

'Most emphatically so,' said Cebes.

'So now tell me, what was the name we were giving just now to whatever won't let in the character of the even?'

'Un-even,' said Cebes.

'And what will we call what won't let the just in, or what won't let in the musical?'

105e 'The second, unmusical,' said Cebes; 'the other, unjust.'

'Fine; and what shall we call whatever doesn't let deadness in?'

'Deathless,'[172] said Cebes.

'Well, soul doesn't let in deadness?'

'No.'

'In that case soul is something deathless – immortal.'

'Yes, immortal.'

'Fine,' said Socrates; 'so are we to declare that that much is now proved? What do you think?'

'Yes, Socrates, quite sufficiently proved.'

'So what about the following question, Cebes?' asked Socrates. 'If the un-even were necessarily imperishable, wouldn't 106a
the three be imperishable?'

'Of course.'

'So if the un-heatable, too, were necessarily imperishable, whenever someone brought hot to snow the snow would get out of the way still intact and unmelted, wouldn't it? It clearly couldn't have perished, and neither would it stay behind and let in the hotness.'

'True,' said Cebes.

'And similarly, I imagine, if the un-coolable were imperishable, whenever something cold advanced on fire the fire wouldn't ever be put out, or perish, but would be off and away, intact.'

'That must be so.'

'So mustn't we say the same about the immortal too? If the 106b
immortal is also imperishable,[173] it's impossible for the soul to perish when death advances on it; because from what we've said before, it certainly won't let death in,[174] or be dead, any more than the three, as we said, or indeed the odd, will be even, or fire or the hotness in the fire will be cold. "But," someone might object, "even if we suppose, as we've agreed, that at the onset of the even[175] the odd doesn't *become* even, what's to pre- 106c
vent its perishing all the same, itself, and the even's coming to be in its place?" In response to such an objection, we wouldn't be in any position to insist that the odd doesn't perish; but then the un-even isn't actually imperishable. Because of course if we'd agreed that it was, it would be quite easy for us to insist that, yes, with the onset of the even the odd and the three are off and away; and we'd be similarly insistent if we'd agreed about the imperishability of fire and the hot and all our other examples. Right?'

'Yes, certainly.'

'So now with the immortal too – if we're agreeing that the immortal is imperishable as well as immortal, soul will be imperishable, too, in addition to being immortal; if we're not in 106d
agreement about that, then we'll need another argument.'

'No need,' said Cebes, 'at any rate so far as that goes; if the

immortal, which is after all eternal, lets destruction in, anything else would be hard put not to.'

'Yes, and the gods,[176] I imagine,' said Socrates, 'and the form of aliveness, itself, together with anything else there may be that's immortal, would be agreed by everyone to be permanently immune to perishing.'

'Zeus! Yes, surely, by every human being, and still more, I imagine, by every god.'

106e 'Given, then, that the immortal is also indestructible, won't soul also be imperishable, if it actually is immortal?'[177]

'Very much so; it must be.'

'When death advances on a man, then, it appears that the mortal part of him dies, but his immortal part is off and away, intact and indestructible, evading death's advance.'

'Evidently so.'

'There's nothing clearer, then, Cebes,' said Socrates, 'than
107a that soul is something immortal and imperishable, and that really and truly *our* souls will be there in Hades after all.'[178]

'Well, Socrates,' said Cebes, '*I* don't have anything else to add, nor do I have any grounds for not trusting in the arguments put forward. But if Simmias here or anyone else has anything to say, I advise them not to keep quiet about it; I don't know what other opportunity they'd be reserving it for, if not the present one, given what the subject is – whether they want to say something themselves or just to listen.'

'No, certainly,' said Simmias; 'I don't any longer have grounds myself, either, for not trusting the conclusion, given
107b what's now transpired; but the size of the subjects we're talking about, together with my poor opinion of human weakness, does still force me to maintain a certain distrust in my own mind in relation to what's been said.'

'Right, Simmias,' said Socrates, 'not only that – that's well said – but our initial hypotheses really must be examined more clearly, even if the two of you do find them trustworthy. If you analyse them[179] well enough, or so I think, you'll be following the argument to the furthest point possible for human beings; if you do find the necessary clarity, you'll look for nothing beyond that.'

'True,' said Simmias.

'But this much it's right to have in mind, in any case: that if 107c
the soul really is immortal, then it needs caring for not just for
the sake of the time in which we do what we call "living", but
for the sake of all time, and from that perspective what anyone
risks by not caring for his soul really would appear to be terri-
fying. For if death meant being separated from everything, it
would be a godsend for the bad to die and be separated at once
from the body *and* from their own badness, along with the
soul; but as things are, given that the soul is evidently immor-
tal, there'd be no way for it to escape from evils, no way of 107d
saving itself, except by becoming as good and wise as pos-
sible.[180] For a soul goes to Hades taking nothing with it except
its education and nurture, which are in fact the very things that
are said to do the greatest benefit or harm to the person who
has died,[181] from the very beginning of his journey to that other
place. What they say is that in fact each person's own divinity,
the one to whom he has been allotted in life, tries to bring him,
after his death, to a certain place where the assembled com-
pany must submit themselves for trial before journeying to 107e
Hades with the guide whose job it is to lead them on their jour-
ney from here to there;[182] there, having met with what fate they
must, and stayed for what time they must, another guide con-
veys them back here again, after many long cycles of time. The
journey is evidently not as Aeschylus' hero Telephus[183] describes
it: he says there's a simple road to Hades,[184] but actually it 108a
appears to me to be neither simple nor a single one. If that were
so, there would be no need of guides;[185] I don't suppose anyone
would miss the path at any point, if there were only one. As
things are, to go by the sacrifices and rites that there are at such
places on roads up here, there seem to be many places where it
divides and forks. Well, the orderly and wise soul follows the
guide and doesn't fail to recognize what is happening to it; but
the one that's in a state of desire for the body, something I
talked about before, finds itself for a long time all of a flutter 108b
about the body, and about the visible sphere in general, and its
appointed divinity has to bring it forcibly to leave, which it
does reluctantly and after many struggles and sufferings. When

it has arrived at the common destination for all souls, if it is unpurified and guilty of something like having engaged in unjust killings, or performed other such acts that are in fact akin to these and belong to kindred souls, everyone avoids it and turns aside from it;[186] no one wants to be its fellow traveller or guide, and it wanders by itself in total helplessness until certain appointed periods of time have come and gone, when it is borne by necessity to the residence appropriate to it. Contrast the fate of the soul that has gone through its life in purity and observing due measure – such souls find gods for fellow travellers and guides, and each moves to take up its residence in the place appropriate to it. The earth has many amazing places, I tell you, and neither its nature nor its size are as they are believed to be by those who like to talk about it; or so someone has managed to convince me.'

'What do you mean by this, Socrates?' asked Simmias. 'I can tell you I've heard a lot of talk about the earth myself, but not what persuades you. So please do tell.'

'Well, yes, Simmias, I will, because just describing them doesn't need the skill of a Glaucus;[187] however, to show that they're *true* appears to me even beyond Glaucus' expertise – and not only that, I'd probably be incapable of it. Anyway even if I did know how to do it, the life I still have left to me, Simmias, doesn't seem to me equal to the length of the argument required. Still, there's nothing to stop me describing what I've been convinced is the general character of the earth and its different regions.'

'Just that will suffice,' said Simmias.

'Well,' said Socrates, 'what I'm convinced of is first of all that if it's in the middle of the heavens, and spherical, it doesn't need either air or any other such physical necessity to stop it from falling;[188] the complete uniformity, everywhere, of the heavens themselves and the equilibrium of the earth itself are sufficient to hold it up, because an object in equilibrium placed in the centre of a uniform container cannot incline any more or any less in any direction, and because it is in a uniform state it will stay where it is.[189] So that', said Socrates, 'is the first thing I've been convinced of.'

'And quite rightly,' said Simmias.

'Well, then, the next thing',[190] said Socrates, 'is that it's something of vast size, and we – those living between the Phasis river 109b
and the Pillars of Heracles[191] – inhabit only a small part of it, living around our sea like ants or frogs around a pond; many others live in many other similar regions. You see, there are many hollows, all over the earth, and of all different shapes and sizes, into which the water, mist and air have collected, while the earth itself lies pure below the purity of the starry sky, which is what most of those who like to talk about such things 109c
call the "ether"; those other things[192] are the sky's sediment, which is always flowing down together into the earth's hollows. As for us, we're quite unaware that we're living in these hollows, and suppose that we're living up on the surface of the earth. It's as if someone lived in the middle of the bottom of the ocean and thought he lived on the surface, so that when he saw the sun and the other stars through the water he supposed the sea was the sky; being too slow and weak, he'd never got as far 109d
as the highest points; never emerged, poked his head up into the region above, and seen how much purer and more beautiful it really was than the one he lived in; never even heard about it from anyone who had seen it. The same thing has happened to us: we live in a hollow of the earth, thinking that we live on its surface, and calling our air "sky", as if this were the sky and the stars moved through it. But actually it's the same thing, that we're too weak and slow to make our way through to the fur- 109e
thest point of our air – because, if anyone did reach its furthest limits, or grew wings and flew up there, then he'd be able to poke his head up and see what lay beyond, just like fish who poke their heads up out of the sea and see things in our world; and if he had sufficient natural capacity to hold up under the sight of what was up there, he'd recognize that *that* after all was the true sky, the true light, and the true earth. For this 110a
"earth" of ours, its stones,[193] this whole region here is corrupted and eaten away, just as things in the sea are eaten away by the brine, so that nothing worth speaking of grows in the sea at all; there's practically nothing that's properly formed, with even the earth in it reduced to mere pebbles, sand, endless

mud and varieties of slime, things that bear no comparison with the beauties in our world. The things in the region above us, in their turn, will surpass things here by a much greater
110b degree still, as I'll tell you; if it's right to tell stories too, this one, Simmias, is worth hearing, about what the things on the earth under the heavens are actually like.'

'Well, Socrates,' said Simmias, 'we'd certainly be delighted to hear the story.'

'Then, my friend, here it is,' said Socrates. 'It's said first of all that if you looked at the earth itself from above, it would resemble one of those balls sewn together out of twelve pieces of leather, variegated, picked out in different colours, of which our colours here, they say, resemble nothing more than sam-
110c ples, like the ones that painters use. The whole earth above is composed of such colours, and ones still brighter and purer than these: one part of it is of a purple of astonishing beauty, another the colour of gold, the white whiter than chalk or snow; all the colours that compose it similarly surpass ours, and they are more in number, too, and more beautiful, than those that we have seen. The very hollows in this true earth,
110d full to the brim as they are of water and air, give the look of a colour as they glitter among the variegated colours around them, so that the general appearance is of one continuous, variegated whole. The things that grow from an earth like this, whether trees or flowers or fruit, are proportionately more beautiful than ours, and the mountains too, in the same proportion, the stones in them smoother, more transparent, their colours more beautiful – of which in fact our little stones here, carnelians, jaspers, emeralds, and all the rest, are the prized
110e fragments; but there, there is nothing that isn't like that, and still more beautiful than these stonelets of ours. The reason is that stones there are in a pure state, not eaten up and corrupted as ours are by mildew and brine because of the things that have settled here, bringing degradation and disease to stones, earth and animals and plants besides; the actual earth is still further
111a adorned, with gold, silver, everything else of that sort. All of these things, many in number and great in size, are in plain view everywhere on that earth: happy the spectators who see

such a spectacle! Among the many living creatures there are humans, some of them living inland, others around the air as we live around the sea, others still on islands, close to the mainland,[194] around which the air flows; and in a word, what water and the sea are to us in relation to our needs, that air is 111b to them, and what air is to us, ether is to them. Their seasons are of a blend[195] that enables them to stay free of sickness, and not only to live much longer lives than people here but to see better than us, hear better, be wiser and everything like that, by the same margin that air surpasses water in purity and ether surpasses air.[196] Moreover they have groves and sanctuaries of gods in which gods are actually resident, so that they receive utterances and prophecies from them in person, see and hear them, meet them face to face, just as they also see 111c sun, moon and stars for what they are;[197] and their happiness in other respects too follows on from these aspects of their lives.

'So much for what they say about the nature of the earth as a whole and its surroundings. But we're told there are also many places situated in its hollows all around the whole, some of them deeper and wider than the one in which we live, others deeper but with a narrower opening than ours, others still that 111d are shallower and broader. All of these are connected to each other by numerous passages under the earth, both narrower and broader, and have ways through between them, along which from one region to another and back again, as if into mixing-bowls, there pour great quantities of water, and ever-flowing subterranean rivers of unimaginable size, both of hot waters and of cold, and great quantities of fire too, great rivers of fire, and many of liquid mud, whether purer or of a slimier 111e sort, like the rivers of mud that run in Sicily before the lava-flow, and the lava-flow itself. The places within the hollows, it's said, are filled by the flows, as these arrive in each at the appropriate moment in the cycle. What moves all of this, up and down, is a kind of oscillation within the earth, and this oscillation occurs, it seems, because of a natural phenomenon of the following kind.[198] One of the passages in the earth is actually on a larger scale than the others, especially in so far as it is 112a

bored right through the whole earth – Homer referred to it, saying of it that it was

> Far, far away, a pit that lies deepest under the earth;[199]

it's what elsewhere both he and many other poets have named Tartarus. What happens is that all the subterranean rivers flow together into this passage and then flow back out of it again, and each river[200] takes on the character of the earth through
112b which it passes. The reason why all the streams flow out of and into Tartarus in this way is that all this liquid lacks a bottom, and has no place to stand, so that it oscillates and surges up and down, and the moving air that surrounds it does likewise, following it as it rushes off to the far parts of the earth and as it returns from these parts; and just as when people breathe their breath is exhaled and inhaled, flowing back and forth, so it is with the moving air there under the earth – oscillating in concert with the liquid, it creates unimaginably terrible winds
112c as it goes in and out. Well, when the water retreats to the region we call "down", it flows through the earth into the streams there, filling them as if they were irrigation channels; and when in turn it leaves those parts and moves "up" again, rushing back in our direction, it fills the streams on this side, which then flow through underground channels and, arriving in the regions to which each has access, create seas, lakes, rivers and
112d springs. From there they sink again beneath the earth, some of them travelling around more extended and more numerous regions, others fewer and smaller, until they discharge again into Tartarus, some of them much lower down than where they were channelled off, others only a little; but all flow in below the point of their outflow, some of them having poured out and down from the side opposite to their entry-point, others on the same side, while others still go round completely in a circle, coiling round the earth either just once or more than once, like snakes, discharging back into Tartarus after having gone down
112e as far as possible – which is as far as the middle, on either side, and no further, since the opposite side, for each set of streams, will be uphill.

'There are, then, many great streams, of all different kinds; but among these many are a particular quartet, of which the greatest, and the one flowing furthest out, in a circle, is the river we call Oceanus. Opposite this, and flowing in the contrary direction, is Acheron,[201] which flows through desert 113a
places, and most notably, when it goes underground, arrives at the Acherusian lake. There it is that the souls of most of those who have died go, and after they have stayed there for certain appointed periods of time, some longer, others shorter, they are sent back again to provide for the coming-into-being of new living creatures.[202] The third river of the four issues[203] between the first two: close to its point of issue, it discharges into a great region ablaze with intense fire, creating a lake that is greater than our sea, boiling with water and mud. From there it proceeds on a circular course, turbid and muddy; among the places 113b
it comes to, as it winds around under the earth, are the margins of the Acherusian lake, but it does not mix with its water,[204] instead discharging lower down into Tartarus after coiling round many times under the surface of the earth. This river is the one people call Pyriphlegethon, whose lava-streams it is that blast up fragments at various points from the earth. Across from this river there issues the fourth, first into a wild and terrible region, as it is said, all of the darkest colour imaginable – 113c
the one they call Stygian, as they give the name Styx to the lake the river creates. Discharging there, and taking up terrible powers in its waters, the river then sinks beneath the earth, coiling round and proceeding in the opposite direction to that of Pyriphlegethon, which it meets at the Acherusian lake, but from the opposite side, nor will its own water mix with any other; it too goes round in a circle and discharges into Tartarus, opposite Pyriphlegethon. This river's name, the poets tell us, is Cocytus.[205]

'This, then, is the nature of the regions under the earth. Now 113d
when the dead come to the place to which each is conveyed by his divine guide,[206] they first submit themselves to judgement, both those who have lived fine and pious lives and those who have not. Those judged to have lived a middling kind of life[207] journey to the river Acheron, where they board the vessels

available to them and use these to journey to the lake; there they reside and undergo purification, each as he deserves, paying
113e penalties to absolve him from any crimes committed and receiving honours for any benefits bestowed.[208] As for those judged incurable because of the enormity of their errors – whether they have repeatedly stolen large sums from temples, persistently killed people contrary to justice and the law or committed other such crimes as there may be, the fate of these, fittingly, is to be cast into Tartarus and never to emerge again. Another category fated to be thrown into Tartarus consists of those judged to have committed errors that are curable but
114a serious, for example people who have committed an act of violence towards a father or a mother but live out the rest of their lives regretting it, or who have become killers under some other similar circumstances; but when these have been in Tartarus for a year, the surge of the great river disgorges them, the killers by way of Cocytus and the father- and mother-beaters by way of Pyriphlegethon, and as they are carried along beside the Acherusian lake they scream and call out, the first sort to those they killed, the second to those they assaulted; their calls are fol-
114b lowed by supplication, as they beg their victims to permit their exit from their river to the lake, and to admit them there; if they succeed in persuading them, they get out, and cease from their suffering,[209] but if not, then they are carried off again into Tartarus, and from there back again into the rivers, and that will go on happening to them until they do persuade those they wronged; because that is the penalty imposed upon them by the judges. But those judged to have done exceptionally well towards living piously are the ones who are freed from these
114c regions here, within the earth, and are released as if from prisons, moving to that pure place of residence above and dwelling on the surface of the earth.[210] And from among these very people, those who have purified themselves sufficiently well by means of philosophy dwell entirely without bodies for the time thereafter, and come to reside in places still more beautiful than those, places that it is not easy to show you, and not in the time we presently have. But it is for the sake of the things we have described, Simmias, that one must do everything to ensure one's

share of goodness and wisdom in one's life; fine is the prize, and the hope great.

'Well, to insist that these things are as I have described them is 114d
not appropriate for a man of intelligence; but that this or something like it is true about our souls and the places in which they dwell, given that the soul is clearly something immortal[211] – this it does seem to me to be worth insisting on, and worth risking, for someone who thinks it to be so; the risk, after all, is a fine one.[212] Such are the charms, as it were, that one must use on oneself, which is why I myself have long since been spinning out my story.[213] In any case, these are reasons why a man should have confidence about his soul – a man, that is, 114e
who in his life has waved goodbye to those other pleasures and adornments, namely those of the body, treating these as alien to him and doing more harm than good; who has instead occupied himself with the pleasures of learning, and adorning his soul not with alien adornments but those that belong to it – moderation, justice, courage, freedom, and truth – waits thus 115a
prepared for the journey to Hades, whenever fate should summon him.[214] So you,' said Socrates, 'Simmias and Cebes and all you others, will all make your separate journeys there at some future time; but for now it is I whom fate calls, as a tragic character might say, and I think it's about time for me to head for the bath, because I think it'd be better to drink the poison freshly bathed and not give the women the trouble of washing a corpse.'

When he heard Socrates say this, Crito said, 'Very well, Soc- 115b
rates; and what are your instructions for these people or for me, whether about your children or anything else? What can we do to please you most?'

'Just what I'm always saying, Crito,' Socrates replied, 'nothing very new: if you care for your own selves, whatever you do will be pleasing to me, and to mine, and to you yourselves too, even if you don't presently agree with me about that;[215] whereas if you neglect yourselves and prove unwilling to live along the lines tracked, as it were, by our present discussions and those we have had before, even after having vehemently agreed with

115c me, in the present circumstances, many times over,[216] you'll do no one any good at all.'

'Then we'll try our best to do as you say,' said Crito; 'but what kind of burial are we to give you?'

'Whatever you like,' said Socrates, 'that is, if you can catch me, and I don't get away from you.' Laughing quietly and looking at us, he said, 'Gentlemen, evidently I'm not persuading Crito that this Socrates person is me, the one who's talking with you and setting out the arguments one beside another; he thinks I'm
115d the other one, the one he'll shortly see as a corpse, and asks how he's to bury me! Everything I've been talking about all this time – about how, when I drink the poison, I'll no longer be with you but will be off and away to some happiness or other of the blest,[217] all of this I think he thinks I'm saying to no purpose, and just using it to comfort you at the same time as comforting myself. So please,' he said, 'stand surety for me with Crito, and give him the opposite of the guarantee he tried to offer the judges. What he guaranteed to them was that I would stay in prison; you must guarantee that I won't stay when I die,
115e but will be off and away, so that Crito may bear it more easily and won't be upset for me when he sees my body going up in flames or being buried, thinking that something terrible is happening to me, or say at my funeral that it's Socrates he's laying out or carrying to the grave or putting in the ground. Because, dearest Crito,' he said, 'you should know that speaking imprecisely doesn't just spoil what we're trying to say, it also damages our souls.[218] You should be more cheerful, and talk of
116a burying my body, which you can do in whichever way you like and think most in line with custom.'

With these words he got up and went into a room to bathe. Crito went after him, telling us to wait. And so we waited, talking to each other about the conversation and reviewing it; sometimes we went over the magnitude of the misfortune that had befallen us, simply thinking of it as if we'd be living the rest of our lives as
116b orphans deprived of a father. When he'd bathed, his children were brought in to him – he had two small sons and one big one – and those women from his household arrived too;[219] he talked to them, in the presence of Crito, instructing them about what he wanted

done, then told both women and children to leave and himself came in to us. By now it was close to sunset, because he'd spent a lot of time inside. He came and sat down, fresh from his bath, and he'd said no more than a few words when the slave of the Eleven[220] came in, went up to him and said 'Socrates, I won't 116c
be complaining about you as I complain about others, for getting angry with me and swearing at me when I pass on the order from the authorities to take the poison. While you've been here I've come to know you as the most gentlemanly and mildest and best man that's ever come to this place, and especially now I'm sure you're not angry with me, because you know who did this to you, and it's them you're angry with. So now – because you know what I've come to tell you – goodbye, 116d
and try to bear what can't be undone, as easily as you can.' At which he burst into tears, turned on his heels and left.

Socrates looked up in his direction and said, 'Farewell[221] to you too, and we'll do just that!' Turning to us in the same moment, he remarked, 'What a civil person! All the time I've been here he's been coming in to see me and having a talk, sometimes – he's been the best; and what a gentleman he is now, weeping for me like that! So come on, Crito, let's do as he tells us. Someone should bring the poison, if it's ready and ground; if it isn't, let the man get on and grind it.'

Crito said, 'But Socrates, it seems to me the sun is still on the 116e
mountains, and isn't yet down. And anyway, I know of others who've put off taking the poison after the order's been given; they've had dinner and a lot to drink, and some of them have even slept with people they happened to take a fancy to. Don't be in a hurry; there's still time.'

Socrates replied, 'Yes, they have a reason for doing that, the people you mention – they think they gain by it; and I have a reason for not doing it, because I don't think there's anything 117a
to gain by drinking the poison that little bit later – unless it's an opportunity to laugh at myself for clinging on to life and eking things out when there's nothing left. Go on,' he said; 'do as I tell you and don't delay.'

On hearing this, Crito nodded to his slave, who was standing near by. The slave went out and after some considerable

time came back with the man whose job it was to administer the poison; he was carrying it, ground and ready, in a cup. When he saw this person, Socrates said, 'So, my good man, since you're the expert in these things, what do I have to do?'

'Nothing, except walk about after you've drunk it,' the
117b man said, 'until there's a heaviness in your legs; then lie down, and it'll work by itself.' And with that he held out the cup to Socrates.

Socrates took it and quite unperturbed he was, Echecrates, without a tremor, or any change in his colour or his face. Fixing the man from under those eyebrows with the usual bull-like look, he asked, 'What do you say to using this drink to make a libation to someone? Is it allowed or not?'

'We only grind what we think is the right amount to drink,' the man replied.

117c 'I understand,' said Socrates; 'but I imagine we're permitted to say a prayer to the gods, and we should – that our removal from this to that other place may be attended by good fortune. Well, that *is* my prayer, and may things turn out like that.' And with these words he raised the cup to his lips and drained it dry, quite without flinching or distaste. Most of us, for a time, were able to hold back our tears fairly well, but when we saw him drinking, and then that the cup was drained, we could hold back no longer; in my own case, the flow of tears quite overwhelmed me, so that I covered my head and wept – for myself,
117d not for Socrates, and for my own ill fortune, such was the man whose friendship was now lost to me. Crito had reacted even before me, getting up and moving away when the tears started to come. Apollodorus, who hadn't stopped weeping even before this, now started bellowing and was in such patent distress that he caused every one of those present to break down, except of course for Socrates himself.

His response was to say 'What a display to make of yourselves! It was for just this reason, you realize, that I sent the
117e women away, to stop them making a noise like this, because I've heard that dying is something to be done in silence.[222] Keep your peace, and be strong.'

That made us ashamed, and we held back our weeping. He

walked about, and when he said his legs were getting heavy, he lay down on his back in accordance with the man's instructions; at the same time the man – this person who had given him the poison – took hold of him, and after a short time started examining his feet and his legs. Then he gave Socrates' foot a hard squeeze and asked if he could feel it; Socrates said 118a
no. After this he squeezed his shins and, by moving up the body in this way he showed us he was gradually becoming cold and numb. Keeping his hold on him, the man said that when it reached his heart he would be gone.

Well, it was now pretty well the parts round the abdomen that were getting cold, when he uncovered his face – because he had it covered – and spoke – these were the last words he uttered: 'Crito,' he said, 'we owe a cock to Asclepius;[223] pay our debt, and no forgetting.'

'I'll do it,' said Crito; 'is there anything else?'

After Crito's question Socrates answered no further. After a little while there was a movement; the man uncovered Socrates' face again, and his eyes were fixed.[224] When he saw it, Crito closed the mouth and the eyes.

This was the end of our companion, Echecrates – a man, as we would assert, who was the best of that generation we'd ever encountered, the wisest, too, and the most just.

1. *It's the one . . . back safe*: See note 3 to *Crito*.
2. *do your best to give us*: Echecrates is evidently there with a number of philosophically minded friends (see 'us all' at 102a).
3. *when he arrived there, too, his lot if anyone's would be a good one*: As Socrates will himself go on to claim, and provide arguments for claiming.
4. *Critobulus was there with his father*: The father is Crito. Of the others mentioned, Hermogenes is one of Socrates' interlocutors in the dialogue *Cratylus*; Epigenes is mentioned as a young member of Socrates' circle at *Apology* 33e; Aeschines, like Phaedo (and Plato), wrote Socratic dialogues; Antisthenes founded the Cynic school of philosophy; Ctesippus makes an appearance in the *Lysis* and in the *Euthydemus*; Menexenus is an interlocutor in a dialogue named after him as well as in the *Lysis*; Simmias and Cebes have already turned up in the *Crito* (45b); Euclides founded another philosophical school (the 'Megarians'), and also appears, along with Terpsion, in the *Theaetetus*; Aristippus, from Cyrene, founded the Cyrenaic school. It is altogether a significant group of people. (In the third century, Callimachus wrote an epigram about a Cleombrotus who committed suicide after reading the *Phaedo* – perhaps on seeing himself permanently recorded as having missed the great man's death.)
5. *as we left the prison in the evening . . . the ship had arrived from Delos*: So, if Socrates and not Crito was right about when the ship would arrive (*Crito* 43d–44a), the dramatic date of the *Crito* should be two days before that of the *Phaedo*.

6. *The Eleven*: See *Apology* 37c and note 66. The prison guard, and the person in charge of the poison (63d–e, 117a–118a), would both have been slaves (see 116b), answering to the citizens making up the Eleven.
7. *the gods*: the Greek has the singular 'the god' – apparently here, as elsewhere, used collectively (see, e.g., *Apology* 19a).
8. *Evenus*: See *Apology* 20a–c.
9. *'music'*: See note 21 to *Crito*.
10. *the god*: Here Apollo, who is also god of music.
11. *I thought it safer not to go off*: Sc. to Hades.
12. *that's not permitted*: Socrates uses the same expression (*ou themiton*) at *Apology* 30d, with note 53; see also *Phaedo* 82c with note 94.
13. *conversation*: Plato here uses his favourite word for *philosophical* conversation or 'dialogue' (*dialegesthai*). See *Apology* 19d with note 7.
14. *Philolaus*: See Introduction to *Phaedo* above.
15. *between now and sunset*: I.e., between now and when the execution will take place.
16. *perhaps you may hear one*: Does Socrates mean now, from him, or just sooner or later?
17. *Probably it will appear . . . than to live*: Socrates expresses himself in this convoluted way perhaps because Cebes hasn't yet accepted that *philosophers*, in particular, will be better off dead.
18. *the right thing*: Or 'the pious thing'; but the reference is still to what is 'permitted' (see 61c, e, and note 12 above).
19. *in his own dialect*: I.e., Boeotian Greek (Thebes being part of Boeotia, a region to the north of Attica).
20. *a deep saying*: The 'saying' also seems curiously reminiscent of the argument of the *Crito* (now transposed to a quite different context); the *Crito* – as a written document – would be a thoroughly 'secret' doctrine from Socrates' point of view. But commentators are probably right in seeing the primary reference as being to 'Orpheus and his crew', who are credited at *Cratylus* with the idea that the body is a kind of prison for the soul. (See also note 74 to the *Apology* in this volume.) If so, it will be useful to recall, later on in the *Phaedo*, that Socrates appears, here at least, to be less than wholly enthusiastic about the idea – or else, perhaps, it is merely 'deep and difficult to penetrate' because its elements, e.g., the special notion of 'soul' involved, have yet to be introduced in the *Phaedo*.

21. *we human beings count, for them, among their possessions*: So that 'we' will be the gods' slaves (and slaves have no business running away from their masters; Socrates will spell out the point). In *Euthyphro* and *Apology*, Socrates has presented himself as a rather special servant of, or slave to, the gods.
22. *the gods*: See note 7 above – Socrates is again using the singular; but the reference appears to be precisely the same as that of 'the gods' (he used the plural) in 62b.
23. *it's not unreasonable . . . find myself*: If Socrates is suggesting that *he* is killing himself, or about to do so, that is perhaps less because he will administer the lethal dose of hemlock to himself than because, as we understand from the *Crito*, he could actually have avoided execution. The gods have made it 'necessary' for him to die both because there are overwhelming reasons – the ones he has rehearsed in the *Crito* – against his running away, and also because, evidently, his 'divinity' hasn't intervened (see *Euthyphro* 3b, *Apology* 40a–b, *Crito* 54e; its absence, in the *Apology* passage, he takes as an indication of approval for his actions, and no doubt he will be doing so here – so that they will actually, in his case, be signalling their wish for him to die).
24. *this kind of service*: Yet another echo of Socrates' way of describing his own situation (his own 'service', or slavery, to the gods).
25. *let me try to make . . . at the trial*: That is, on the specific 'charge' in question now, of being too ready to abandon his friends, and his masters, the gods. The effect of this sentence of Socrates' is to make a direct and specific connection between the argument or arguments he is about to put forward and the concluding page or so of the *Apology*, where he mused on what might lie in store for him after his death.
26. *dead men better than those to be found up here*: The remark might be aimed especially at the jury at his trial. In any case Socrates will immediately soften his claim about the quality of the humans he'll meet even in Hades.
27. *if I insist on anything of this sort*: I.e., presumably, anything to do with what happens to humans after death.
28. *so it's long been said, at any rate*: If anything of the sort had 'long' been said, it would have been in the context of mystery religion; but there, in place of the opposition between 'good' and 'bad', we would be more likely to find one between those who had and those who had not been initiated into the relevant rites (see *Phaedo* 69c–d). What the present passage represents is a mix that will become altogether familiar in later parts of the *Phaedo*,

between distinctively Socratic-Platonic ideas (see, e.g, *Apology* 41d: 'there is nothing bad that can happen to a good man whether in life or after he has died, nor are his affairs neglected by the gods') and ideas drawn from religious practices. See General Introduction, §2, and Introduction to *Phaedo* above.

29. *our countrymen*: I.e., in Thebes, or Boeotia generally, a region generally thought of by Athenians as uncultured (and by Simmias, evidently, as a philosophical desert).

30. *we think of it*: 'We' here can be understood quite generally; even 'ordinary people' would have been likely to think the same. The question which will be raised later will be the different one, about what happens to the soul *after* its separation from the body. See General Introduction, §6.

31. *cloaks*: A 'cloak' here (*himation*) is a large, single piece of cloth thrown over the shoulder, wrapped around the body and reaching to the ground.

32. *the actual business of acquiring wisdom*: I.e., the thing that is the philosopher's real business.

33. *any aspect of things*: Or 'any of the things that are' (*ti tôn ontôn*). The reference of the phrase 'the things that are' (*ta onta*) in Plato will frequently be to the special set of entities called 'forms', each of which is, roughly speaking, the *essence* of whatever it may be: goodness, say, or justice (see General Introduction, §4). But it would probably be misleading actually to translate the phrase in this way in the present context. For the moment, Socrates is in the process of arguing for the more general point that in order to understand anything – goodness, justice, or whatever it may be – we have to understand it 'by itself', rather than as we see it, or think we see it, exemplified in the world around us; and, for now, 'the things that are' may reasonably be taken as 'the things that exist', which will include ordinary things as well as 'forms'. But later on (beginning at 75d) such phrases will be recognized as having a more specialized, semi-technical use; see note 70 below.

34. *what things really are*: Or 'what is' (*to on*; see preceding note).

35. *something that's just and nothing but just*: I.e., the sort of thing we are talking about when we talk about justice 'in the abstract' – though for Plato things like justice will be anything but abstract entities.

36. *without . . . dragging in any of the other senses to accompany his reasoning*: As we shall discover later on, this is evidently not intended to rule out some different kind of role for the senses in the search for truth (i.e., other than 'in the company of' reason).

37. *each aspect of things*: Or 'each of the things that are'. See note 33 above.
38. *how things really are*: Or 'what is' (*to on*, as in 65c).
39. *those who are genuinely philosophers*: I.e., those who are genuinely *philo-sophoi*, 'lovers of wisdom (*sophia*)' (see 66e).
40. *not letting it infect us with the kind of thing it is*: For a more complete working-out of this idea, see 83c–e.
41. *everything unalloyed*: I.e., all things as understood or grasped 'by themselves' (66e). For the idea of grasping 'everything unalloyed' or pure, see further 109a–111c.
42. *a freeing and parting of soul from body*: Contrast Socrates' earlier definition of death at 64c (merely as a neutral *separation* of the two things, soul and body).
43. *human darlings*: I.e., beloved boys (*paidika*).
44. *a lover of wisdom*: I.e., *philosophos*, (a) philosopher (see note 39 above).
45. *the same person will also be a lover of money and a lover of honour*: In the *Republic* too (see especially 580d–581c) Plato has Socrates divide the whole of humanity into lovers of wisdom, honour and money; in the *Phaedo* itself, those who 'love the body' have already been identified, implicitly, with lovers of money (66c–d), but 'honour', if identified with power and office, will be hardly less a distraction from the life of the mind than money is.
46. *those in the state we've described*: I.e., 'lovers of wisdom'.
47. *moderation*: The Greek term (*sôphrosunê*) has traditionally been rendered as 'temperance', because of its connection with self-control, i.e., control of one's desires and passions. However 'temperance' has now largely fallen out of ordinary English usage – and also fails to convey the further, and fundamental, connection of *sôphrosunê* with 'sound-mindedness'. 'Moderation' fares better than 'temperance', at least on the former of these two grounds, 'self-control' being ruled out by the fact that in *Socrates*' 'philosophical' version of *sôphrosunê* there will actually be no 'self' – no desires, at any rate – to be controlled.
48. *one's desires*: I.e., plainly, in this context, the desires 'of the body'.
49. *loving wisdom*: Or 'in philosophy'.
50. *virtue*: Or 'excellence' (*aretê*) – but it is some of the traditional 'virtues' that Socrates and Simmias have just been discussing.
51. *when they said . . . using riddles to hint at the truth*: The reference here is to what generally goes under the heading of 'Orphic' teaching.

Plato's Socrates is noticeably dismissive of such teaching in its original context (see *Republic* 363d). Towards the end of the *Phaedo* Socrates will expand on his interpretation here of Orphic 'truth', in his description of the geography of Hades: see 109a–114c.

52. *the thyrsus*: The emblem of Dionysiac worshippers (the 'Bacchoi': the Greek has 'few that are Bacchoi', i.e. genuine followers of Bacchus/Dionysus).
53. *dispersed like breath or smoke*: Cebes here refers to the kind of view reflected in Homer: see especially *Iliad* 23.100–101, with 16.856 and 22.362.
54. *and that it has some capacity for wisdom*: It is another essential feature of the insubstantial 'soul' that survives the body in Homer that it is mindless; see *Iliad* 23.103–4. In case there is any doubt that Plato had these lines in mind (and the ones referred to in the previous note), he has Socrates quote them verbatim at *Republic* III, 386d–387a.
55. *talk these things through*: Or 'go through the story' (*diamuthologein*) – an expression that Plato can use even to describe stretches of argument.
56. *I certainly don't think . . . don't concern me*: See *Apology* 19b–d, on Aristophanes' lies about Socrates.
57. *there's an ancient doctrine . . . out of the dead*: The 'ancient doctrine' in question is usually associated with Pythagoras and his followers, and with Empedocles (himself a 'Pythagorean', in a broad sense, though hardly a 'follower' of anybody).
58. *even if we don't always have names for them*: I.e., presumably, names for the processes.
59. *it must indeed be like that*: Whatever we may conclude about the strength of Socrates' argument here for the survival of the soul, the theory of change on which it is based is in itself an interesting one; Socrates goes out of his way to stress that it is intended as a quite general theory (70d–e).
60. *Endymion*: Endymion was loved by Selene, the moon, and granted eternal sleep as an alternative to death.
61. *what Anaxagoras describes . . . 'All things together'*: For Anaxagoras, see *Apology* 26d. 'All things together' is Anaxagoras' description of the state of things in the cosmos before Mind started the process of the creation of the present order.
62. *recollecting*: Or 'being reminded' (*anamimnêiskesthai*, the Greek term here, in fact, combines both meanings). What Cebes is introducing is what has come to be known as Plato's 'theory of recollection'.

63. *deathless*: Or 'immortal' (*athanatos*). The two English terms are essentially synonymous; but 'immortality' perhaps carries more connotations than 'deathless', and more than the argument in the *Phaedo* may have justified at this point (or at various other points later on, where 'deathless' will be preferred to 'immortal').
64. *There's one quite beautiful argument . . . how things are*: Cebes has here given what looks much like a summary of the 'demonstration' of the true nature of learning (i.e., as 'recollection') in the *Meno*: see *Meno* 81e–86b.
65. *if, on seeing something . . . came to have in mind*: So 'recollection', in this context, will always be a matter of being reminded of something by something else (see note 62 above); the 'theory of (learning as) recollection' might itself more helpfully be labelled the 'theory of being-reminded'.
66. *deficient at all in respect of its likeness to the thing he's recollected*: At least, perhaps, to the extent of seeing that the first thing *isn't* the second one, because it's there while the second one isn't.
67. *are we to say that something of the sort exists?*: Or 'are we to say that this is something?' The question is whether there is such a thing as equality, over and above or besides things like sticks and stones that are equal (have the property of being equal). This is the kind of entity to which Socrates will shortly attach the title of 'form' – but which he is introducing gradually, and in a series of steps, no doubt because of the metaphysical commitments that it involves.
68. *the equals by themselves*: These, here, are (any) two equal things thought of just as equal and nothing else. That carries no implications for the way he proposes to understand 'equality' (see the preceding note); it is merely a way of introducing his real question, about the difference between equality itself and equal sticks, stones, etc., and making it more transparent.
69. *those other equals*: I.e., equal things like sticks or stones.
70. *what is*: I.e., presumably (given how we have got to this point) 'what is beautiful (sc. and only beautiful), good (and only good)', and so on. 'What is', expressed as a noun, will be *to on* (plural *ta onta*) – a phrase which was first introduced, in the *Phaedo*, back at 65c, but which now acquires a more specialized sense (cf. note 33 above). (The expression *to on* is actually juxtaposed with *ho esti* at 78d, perhaps for the very purpose of indicating the interchangeable nature of the two phrases.)

71. *those pieces of knowledge*: Literally, 'those knowledges' – the plural taking us back to things like lyres, cloaks, and the owners, our knowledge of each of which, it was established, would be distinct (73d; cf. Simmias at 76d). The kind of knowledge involved in these more ordinary cases will presumably need to be distinguished from the kind that Socrates will shortly introduce in relation to the beautiful, the good, and so on: knowledge that implies the ability to *give an account of* the thing known (76b).
72. *all the things of that kind that there are*: More literally, 'all such being'.
73. *So this is where we end up . . . hold either*: So now significant metaphysical commitments *are* being made: there must be things like the beautiful itself, the good itself, and the equal itself, to which we can 'refer' – and so compare – good things, beautiful things, equal things, and so on; the kinds of thing that we will find these ordinary good, beautiful, and equal things 'falling short of' (as particular equals 'fall short of' equality: 74c). They must also exist in such a way as to be accessible to souls before they are born into the bodies they are in now. Quite how souls came to have knowledge of them, Socrates does not say and will not say; however, in the next part of the discussion he will give us some further general characteristics of the entities in question ('forms', as he will call them).
74. *my own view is that our proof is good enough*: Socrates' own position was more cautious, insofar as he treated the conclusion about the soul as dependent on the existence of the beautiful, the good, etc., and treated *that* as a hypothesis – as he will continue to do (see, e.g., 107b).
75. *after it dies*: Here 'dying' will emphatically not imply perishing; we need to recall here the definition of death as the separation of soul from body (64c).
76. *perhaps there's a child in us, all the same, that has fears like that*: Cebes perhaps responds here with a joke of his own: if our souls are to be reborn, into new bodies, won't there be a potential baby in all of us?
77. *to be sung to . . . charming it out of him*: The sort of 'incantation' that Socrates is likely to have in mind here is of a strange sort, i.e., rational argument (as illustrated in the surrounding context, here in the *Phaedo*); for the idea, see especially *Charmides* 157a.
78. *there's nothing you could better spend your money on*: If the reference here is to paying money to professional teachers (like Evenus: 60d), the suggestion is hardly serious; hence Socrates' next proposal.

79. *to do what's needed*: I.e., finding the 'charms' required. 'You' presumably refers not just to Cebes and Simmias but to Socrates' friends in general.
80. *that set of things . . . our answers*: 'That set of things': or 'that being'; but 'being' (*ousia*) is probably here a collective noun, as at 76d. 'Of whose essence': or 'of whose being' (*tou einai*). 'As we question each other and offer our answers': i.e., in the kind of 'dialectical' exchange Socrates has with Euthyphro in the *Euthyphro* on the nature of piety – or, better, the kind he might have on the same subject with someone like Cebes, more philosophically adept than Euthyphro.
81. *each 'what is' by itself, which just is whatever it is*: See 75d. In fact, what is offered here in the translation is a considerable over-translation: Socrates himself merely juxtaposes the two phrases he uses for 'what is' (*ho esti* and *to on*). On this juxtaposition, see note 70 above.
82. *in contact with things that are themselves unchanging*: The 'contact' in this case will be metaphorical.
83. *resembles the divine*: I.e., resembles the immortal (since the gods are 'the immortals').
84. *the sort of thing that is naturally subject and slave*: As, e.g., Socrates is himself the 'slave' of the god or gods?
85. *mindless*: Also 'not the object of intellect' (*anoêtos*).
86. *when a person dies . . . age that that implies*: One might perhaps have expected an older, already decrepit body to decay more quickly than a young one; Plato either doesn't know that this isn't in fact the case, or else he is choosing to pretend – to have Socrates to pretend – ignorance (perhaps as a light way of drawing attention back to his own case: old, ugly . . .?).
87. *to the true place of Hades*: There is a pun in the Greek on *aidês*, 'unseen', and *Haidês*, 'Hades', in the form of the phrase *eis Haidou*, i.e., 'to (the place of) Hades' – where 'Hades' is now the god who lives in the place often itself called by the same name; hence 'to the presence of the good, wise god', given that Socrates has already expressed his conviction that on death he himself will go to join 'wise and good gods' (63b). This (place) Hades will itself be 'unseen' ('a second place of the same sort') just because it is '*Ha(i)dês*' (i.e., *aidês*); the *first* such place will have been the one that the soul 'takes itself off to' in life, which itself was populated with those special items, themselves unseen, such as the beautiful itself, the good itself, and so on. But that first place was purely a metaphorical one, as the 'taking off' was itself

metaphorical; hence the fact that Socrates calls the second place the 'true' (place of) Hades. We should probably notice that he doesn't quite say here, as he has every opportunity to say, that those same special objects – what he will later call the 'forms' – are actually in the 'true' Hades (as well as in the imaginary one); death, it seems, won't automatically take our souls to where the 'forms' are. This is consistent with what Socrates typically says about such things, outside the context of myth, namely that they are not actually the sort of thing to *have* a location in the first place; at the same time he is clearly more than flirting with the general idea that getting away from ('out of') the body will increase our chances of accessing the truth – and who would not want the *truth* about things?

88. *out of fear of Hades and the unseen*: That pun again on *Ha(i)dês/ aidês* (see preceding note).

89. *weren't on their guard . . . a similar sort*: 'Weren't on their guard': i.e., against such behaviour becoming a habit. 'The kinds': or 'the species' (*genê*, 'families').

90. *where every other type of soul will go . . . resemble*: Will there then be a question whether any particular soul is actually still that of a human, or rather that of some kind of animal, even in life?

91. *the common, civic virtue*: See 68c–69c.

92. *decent men are born from them*: It would surely be out of tune with Socrates' general message if some people were actually born 'decent' or respectable, since that would suggest that they would be born already with some kind of 'virtue', even without 'habit and practice'. Should we suppose a the presence of another pun – with a covert reference to Herodotus, *Histories* 2.32, where men 'of a decent size' (*metrioi*, as here) are contrasted with pygmies?

93. *to arrive at that destination*: I.e., by becoming pure soul, without admixture of body (see 114c). Socrates is presumably not seriously suggesting that humans (human souls) may become gods; they will rather belong to a kind which, like the gods, consists of free-floating souls – just as tyrants become wolves *or* hawks *or* . . .

94. *not permitted*: See 61c, with note 12.

95. *it's forced to investigate things*: E.g., equality, beauty, goodness (*ta onta* again: see notes 33 and 70 above).

96. *apprehends . . . what each thing . . . is*: Or 'apprehends . . . whichever it may be of the things that are (*ta onta*) . . .' (see preceding note).

97. *what the soul sees . . . is . . . unseen*: The paradox in effect takes us back to that recurrent pun on the name 'Hades': see notes 87 and 88 above.
98. *causes it to be of the same kind as the body*: Or 'makes it bodily', i.e., corporeal; but this is, presumably, no more to be taken literally than is the idea that the body 'says', or believes, anything.
99. *the divine, the pure, and the uniform*: With which, as Socrates has said, it is naturally akin, despite what it has become.
100. *not for the reasons ordinary people are*: See 82a–c, with 68c–69c – to which both 82a–c and the present passage have now given a specific spin. Philosophers will be truly 'orderly' ('moderate'), courageous, and so on as a by-product of their philosophical quest, and of their understanding of where true value lies (i.e., in finding the truth).
101. *Penelope*: Wife of Odysseus, who promised her suitors – who, like her, supposed that her husband was dead – that she would choose between them when she had finished her weaving. She then managed to delay having to make the choice by unpicking by night what she had woven during the day.
102. *not merely the subject of belief*: I.e., not merely believed to be true; the contrast is with the state of non-philosophers, who think true 'whatever the body . . . says is so' (83d).
103. *Surely you don't think . . . what we said?*: As the next sentence surely confirms, Socrates is here being ironic; and in fact he has himself presented his last argument as anything but conclusive. Note especially 80b '[soul is] absolutely indissoluble, *or something close to that*', and the curiously roundabout, and qualified, manner in which he expressed himself in 84b: 'there's no danger that *[the truly philosophical] sort of soul will be afraid*' that it'll be blown apart – that is, one that has been brought up, and has behaved, as Socrates has suggested such a soul will. In other words, its convictions about 'Hades', which themselves remain more than a little murky, will be dependent on a soul's way of life, and its view of how the world is constituted; and a non-philosopher, or someone still to make a choice between doing philosophy or not, might well need more argument before going down the philosophical route and giving up his 'childish' fears about death, especially if that also means giving up the pleasures – or what 'ordinary people' call the pleasures – of life.
104. *and more loudly*: I retain here the manuscript reading *malista*; the editors of the new Oxford text prefer an emendation which would give us 'more *beautifully*'. The key issue is, perhaps, about

how Socrates would here want to describe his own performance, insofar as he is here describing that as much as the swans'. (Would he want to describe his own performance as 'beautiful'? Perhaps; perhaps not.)

105. *nightingale . . . swallow . . . hoopoe*: A reference to the story of Philomela, Procne and Tereus, who turned into birds after a series of violent events.

106. *sacred to the same god*: See 60c–61b, together with Socrates' description of his service or slavery to Apollo, god of Delphi, in the *Apology*.

107. *eleven Athenian men*: See 59e and note 6 above ('the Eleven').

108. *we*: 'We' is either Simmias on his own or Simmias and other members of Socrates' circle or, as some interpreters have held, 'we *Pythagoreans*'. But against the third option, see Introduction to *Phaedo* above.

109. *in what we call death*: Even on Simmias' account, 'perishing' will be different from 'death' – that is, for the body.

110. *the person hasn't actually perished but exists intact somewhere*: I.e., the whole person, consisting of both body and soul.

111. *the weaver will have worn out . . . less robust than a cloak*: That is, a person can still be *more* robust than a cloak even if, like cloaks, a person actually perishes.

112. *to a person putting forward the case you're proposing*: Omitting a word (*ê*) from the transmitted text, as proposed by some editors (but not those of the Oxford text). Cebes is still trying – and presumably failing – to be tactful, by not attacking Socrates too directly.

113. *you'll be cutting off this beautiful hair of yours*: I.e., in grief, according to custom.

114. *the Argives*: The oath of the men of Argos related to a particularly heavy defeat by, and loss of territory to, the Spartans.

115. *not even Heracles could fight alone against two . . . so long as the light lasts*: The 'two' are the monstrous Hydra and a giant crab; Heracles called on Iolaus' help to defeat them. 'So long as the light lasts': darkness would mean fighting had to be suspended – and nightfall will also bring Socrates' death.

116. *arguments aren't like human beings in that respect*: The idea that really bad human beings are quite a rare phenomenon is consistent with Socratic intellectualism (see General Introduction, §2). People go wrong not because they are *naturally* bad, but because their reasoning is faulty; and Socrates seems generally unwilling to give up reasoning with anyone.

117. *spent all his time on constructing opposing arguments*: I.e., on the special art of 'antilogic', the essence of which consisted in the ability to lead a respondent who starts with one position, on anything whatever, into asserting the opposite of that position, the result being – since the second position would be as vulnerable to counter-argument as the first – to make everything (whatever) equally uncertain. Socrates is not just talking here about expert practitioners of 'antilogic', but also – and perhaps particularly – about those who have been drawn into studying it.
118. *Everything there is . . . period of time*: The chief reference here is to the 'flux' theory of Heraclitus, but Protagoras' relativism is also in the frame (see *Theaetetus* 152–60). The Euripus is the narrow strait between the island of Euboea and mainland Greece.
119. *I'm presently in danger . . . attitude towards it*: See *Theaetetus* 167e–168a. Socrates may well particularly have in mind here the 'eristics' – people like the brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, as portrayed in the *Euthydemus*, whose only concern is to appear to the audience to win the argument, by any means available. There is a clear overlap between 'eristics' and 'antilogicians' (for which see note 117 above), but the former are perhaps mere opportunists, while the latter are genuine theorists, or provide material that serious theorists like Protagoras can use.
120. *see how determined I am to get the advantage*: I.e., because either way he will actually 'win'.
121. *the set of things*: Or 'that being' (= 'those beings': *ousia*), as, e.g., at 78d. 'The name "what is"' was originally introduced in 75d.
122. That *hypothesis*: I.e., presumably, 'that the set of things that bears the name "what is" exists by itself'.
123. *if it's been tuned more . . . a lesser one*: It is not clear that Socrates has in mind more than one set of circumstances here, namely when a (multi-)stringed instrument is tuned more or less successfully; but just possibly 'tuned more' may refer to the tuning of particular strings, 'tuned to a greater extent' to the tuning of a larger number of strings.
124. *bodily events*: Or, perhaps, 'the bodily passions' (*pathê*); but since Socrates immediately goes on to mention 'heat' (i.e. getting too hot?), he is evidently casting his net more widely.
125. *He struck his chest . . . you have endured*: Homer, *Odyssey* 20.17–18.
126. *we wouldn't be in agreement . . . or with ourselves*: The second consideration – 'agreement with ourselves' – is presumably the more important for Socrates (he and Simmias have agreed that

the attunement theory is incompatible with a number of other things they both accept).

127. *Cadmus*: 'Attunement' in the preceding argument translated the Greek *harmonia* (for which 'harmony' would be an inappropriate translation); Harmonia was the wife of Cadmus, mythical founder of Simmias' and Cebes' home city of Thebes.

128. *labours its way*: I.e., because it is perpetually 'weaving' new bodies.

129. *the reason behind coming-into-being and perishing in general*: Socrates will be talking about more than mere *causes*; the subject will be explanation in a rather broader sense.

130. *the next step . . . your own position*: I.e., in so far as Cebes' own position includes an implicit account of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be in the world? The main point of Socrates' account, however, will be that the world somehow *makes sense* – whereas Cebes' implicates even soul and mind itself in a purely mechanical process of change.

131. *as some people used to say*: The reference may be to Archelaus of Athens.

132. *Is it blood that we think with, or air, or fire?*: That we think with our blood was Empedocles' idea; air and fire were central to the accounts of the cosmos, and of its animal inhabitants, given respectively by Diogenes of Apollonia and by Heraclitus.

133. *Or is it none of these . . . knowledge comes about?*: Contrast the rather different account of the source of knowledge that Socrates has offered, which gives a much reduced role to the senses.

134. *whenever flesh was added to flesh . . . big one*: All of this looks remarkably like the kind of thing that might have been got from Anaxagoras' book – which Socrates will actually only introduce in 97b–c. But then he was already quoting from Anaxagoras back in 72c.

135. *one and the same knowledge*: I.e., knowledge of what's good must bring with it knowledge of its opposite. Socrates perhaps introduces this point to correct the impression, which he might otherwise be giving, that he thinks that mind actually succeeds in ordering *everything* for the best. We know, for example, that he thinks there are bad, that is, misguided, people in the world: see 90a–b, with note 116 above.

136. *the other stars*: The sun, the moon and the other planets (apart from earth in the centre) are themselves 'stars', even if 'wandering' ones (*planêtai*).

137. *grabbing the books . . . what was worse*: For Anaxagoras' books, see already *Apology* 26d–e.

138. *makes no use of his mind . . . bizarre things instead*: 'Makes no use of his mind': i.e., either his own mind or his cosmic Mind. 'And doesn't charge it with any part . . . citing . . .': there is a further pun in the Greek here, on *aitia* = 'reason' and *epaitiasthai* (*aitian*) = 'charge' (before a court).
139. *by the Dog . . . what appeared best to them*: For the oath, see *Apology* 22a. 'Well, I think they would': if his bones and sinews were operating independently of his mind, he mightn't know what they were up to. 'Carried along by an appearance of what was best': i.e., that it would be best for them to save their own skin.
140. *ordinary people . . . grope around in the dark*: 'Ordinary people' are, as usual, non-philosophers. By implication Anaxagoras (it's his book or books, after all, from which the present discussion started) is no different from the non-philosophical many – nor are whichever other students of 'natural philosophy' are about to be alluded to. 'As they grope around in the dark': apparently we're to imagine a game of blind man's buff, where the participants have to guess the name of the person they catch.
141. *they'll discover an Atlas . . . hold everything together*: The implication presumably is that these people will still need to add in an Atlas (the Titan in myth who holds up the heavens on his shoulders), to supplement their mechanical account; by contrast, Socrates claims, his own preferred 'Atlas', i.e., his preferred kind of explanation, already has all the power needed to 'hold things together'.
142. *that wasn't offered to me*: I.e., by Anaxagoras or any of the other materialists referred to.
143. *'second sailing'*: The sense of this phrase has been much discussed: either, as in the translation given, it is a metaphor for second best (as when a ship's captain resorts to using oars in place of sails – an ancient explanation), or else it indicates little more than a second attempt, perhaps by a different route.
144. *I feared my soul could be completely blinded*: See 96c.
145. *What I decided . . . world in them*: Back in 85c–d, Simmias described what looked like a similar position, but there is rather more behind Socrates' version (e.g., his disappointing encounter with Anaxagoras); and in fact Simmias went on to admit, at 92c–d, that the kind of statement he himself was relying on, i.e., soul as attunement, wasn't so plausible after all. 'Reasoned accounts' is something of an over-translation of the plain Greek term *logoi* here; other possibilities might be a plain 'statements'

('things said'), or else 'theories'. But, as will become clear, whatever it is that Socrates has in mind has close connections with his typical methods, which are above all concerned with reasoning things out – and in particular, giving 'reasoned accounts' of them (which neither just 'statements' nor 'theories' will succeed in bringing out).

146. *someone who examines things . . . in front of us*: There is probably an implicit reference here to one of the possible ways of describing the relationship between 'things in themselves' ('forms') and the particulars that 'share' in them, i.e., as a relationship between original and image. This is not included in the short list of such descriptions Socrates will soon give (in 100d), but see, e.g., *Phaedrus* 250b, *Republic* 520c, *Timaeus* 48e–49a.

147. *I posit . . . as untrue whatever is not in tune with it*: As Simmias singularly failed to do with his soul-as-attunement hypothesis (see especially 92c).

148. *in the preceding discussion*: That is, since 65d.

149. *show you the reason for things and establish that the soul is something immortal*: The immediate connection between the two subjects (the 'reason' for things, and the immortality of the soul) presumably lies in Socrates' original promise (95e–96a) of an 'investigation of the reason behind coming-into-being *and perishing* in general'.

150. *all those other 'reasons' . . . added to it*: 'All those other "reasons" confuse me': see 96a–97b. 'That other beautiful thing': i.e., the beautiful itself, (what will soon be labelled) the 'form'. 'Or in whatever way or manner it has come to be added to it': reading *prosgenomenou* instead of *proagoreuomenê* (as printed in the Oxford text), for the reasons given in my 1993 commentary. The idea that 'the beautiful' has come to be 'added' to particular beautiful things may come as something of a surprise, given the way Socrates has hitherto emphasized that such things exist 'alone and by themselves'; but if the beautiful can be 'present' in beautiful things, or 'in association' with them, then it is already clear that it must be *both* an independently existing entity *and* – somehow – in the many beautiful particulars. The question is also raised, but by no means definitively answered, in the *Parmenides*. But meanwhile things like 'bigness in us', and 'smallness in us', will play an important role in the argument that Socrates is now launching: an argument that he hopes will assure us of the permanent survival of the soul.

151. *by virtue of his head*: See 96e.

152. *Cebes laughed and said, 'Yes it would!'*: Cebes is probably laughing at Socrates' joking evocation of monsters rather than laughing off the objections; Socrates is clearly serious about these, for reasons that will become apparent.

153. *having come to share in the appropriate essence . . . share in*: For this talk of 'essence', see 65d, 78d.

154. *As for you . . . answer accordingly*: The present sentence begins one of the most controversial and difficult short passages in the *Phaedo* (even if Simmias and Cebes, and Echecrates, claim to understand it at once: 102a), and considerable annotation seems to be required – not least to place the various parts of the passage in the context of the exchanges that have preceded it. In order to avoid undue disturbance to the flow of the text, the notes – which amount to a mini-commentary – are gathered together at the end of the passage, at 102a.

155. *As for you . . . the way I describe*: 'The safety that's to be found in the hypothesis': i.e., the particular hypothesis that Socrates introduced as 'safest' at 100d–e. 'If someone held on to the hypothesis itself': i.e., on the interpretation adopted here, if someone picked up the hypothesis and treated it as something other than a hypothesis (as Simmias himself did with the soul-as-harmony theory?). The person 'holding on' to the hypothesis in this case might perhaps be an opponent or sceptic as much as a supporter; in any case, as the next sentence shows, it will be someone who is asking questions prematurely. 'To see if they were in tune with each other, or out of tune': as were the 'consequences' of the natural scientists' theories in 96a–97b; Simmias' theory was 'discordant' in a different way. 'Whichever appeared best of those above the first one': 'above', because more explanatory? A possible example might be the sort of account of the relationship between 'forms' and particulars that Socrates declined to give in 100d. 'Until you arrived at something sufficient for the purpose': i.e., presumably, something that provided the kind of reasoned account that was being asked for. 'The antilogicians': on these see note 117 above. 'By talking about your starting-point and its consequences as if there were no difference between them': whatever it is, exactly, that Socrates has in mind here, it will be true in any case that the 'antilogicians' have no stable starting-points – and certainly no 'safe' ones like his own. 'To stir everything together': there is an echo here of that phrase of Anaxagoras' quoted by Socrates back in 72c, a phrase with which Anaxagoras' cosmology evidently

began (*homou panta chrêmata ên*: '[in the beginning] all things were together'). This can hardly be accidental; it is in any case part of Socrates' point that the consequences of materialist science, and of 'antilogic', as Socrates has described them, are hard to tell apart.

156. *extraordinary clarity*: There is not the slightest sign of irony on Echecrates' part here (any more than there is in Simmias' and Cebes' response); evidently Plato did not think the preceding passage as difficult as his modern interpreters have found it.

157. *each of the forms exists*: This is the first time that the term 'form' has been used in the *Phaedo*, even if the things it is being used to refer to – those special 'things in themselves', representing the 'essence' of each kind of thing – have long since been at or near the centre of attention.

158. *talking like a handbook*: I.e., using the dry, technical language of a handbook (though actually his own language will turn out to be slightly more colourful, and metaphorical, than most handbook-writers would allow themselves to be).

159. *too much for bigness, being what it is*: This bigness will, it seems, just be a kind of miniature replica of 'bigness itself', which is something that's big and nothing else (not something that's big by way of extension, just what bigness is, the 'essence' of bigness).

160. *its counterpart in nature*: I.e., clearly, the 'form', as it exists independently (of 'us' or anything else).

161. *three*: Either the form, threeness, or something 'sharing in' it, i.e., a particular group of three things viewed just as such; or, more probably, both (cf. note 163 below).

162. *whichever form it is*: Here the Greek term is *idea*, Plato's second semi-technical term for 'form', the other being *eidos*.

163. *the opposite forms*: 'Forms' here – Socrates switches back to the term *eidos* – are evidently the Platonic forms as they are *in* things; a form itself, Socrates has said, is that by virtue of which a particular thing comes to have the corresponding property, or 'character' (*idea, morphê*: see immediately below) – which, however, can also be thought of as the form 'in us', as, e.g., bigness is in Phaedo.

164. *whatever occupies them*: I.e., whatever form (Socrates continues with his military metaphor).

165. *whatever the character of three . . . odd as well*: 'Whatever': i.e., whatever group of things. 'The character of three': or 'the form (*idea*) of three', i.e., 'in us'; but this *is* 'the character of three' (see note 163 above).

166. *the character opposite . . . will never come to belong to the sort of thing in question*: I.e., to something 'occupied by' three, and so by oddness too. 'The one that has this effect': in the case in question, as Socrates will immediately confirm, this will be the odd – which is, after all, that 'by virtue of which' anything odd will be odd. ('The character opposite to the [character] . . .': Socrates uses first *idea*, then *morphê*. See note 163 above.)
167. *will never come to belong to the three*: I.e., it will never be 'let in to', 'admitted to', the three.
168. *any more than the half-as-much-again . . . character of the whole*: I here borrow David Gallop's interpretation of a puzzling and perhaps corrupt part of the text (more literally: 'Nor again will one-and-a-half, and the rest of that series, the halves . . .').
169. *don't answer me by giving me back whatever it is I'm asking you about*: That is, 'if I ask why something is beautiful, don't say "by virtue of the beautiful, of course!"' – as Socrates had previously insisted, and would no doubt still be insisting if he didn't need a rather different kind of account of things for the purposes of the present argument. He is very careful to avoid even suggesting that the new kind of answers will be *explanatory*, as well he might be, since they look dangerously like the sorts of explanations ('reasons') he castigated Anaxagoras and others for giving.
170. *a cleverer answer*: It is at the least extremely rare for Socrates to use the adjective he employs here ('clever': *kompsos*) in a genuinely positive sense; and the present context appears to be no exception to this general rule. See the preceding note.
171. *oneness*: I.e., in the presence of the extra unit that will distinguish an odd from an even number.
172. *deathless*: I.e., 'un-dead', 'immortal' (*a-thanatos*, where the *a-* is alpha privative, the equivalent of English 'un-', and *thanatos* is 'death' or, in the present context, the property of being dead – 'deadness'). See note 63 above.
173. *if the immortal is also imperishable*: Only living things can die – or not die; and what other way will living things have of perishing, except dying? Socrates is not here justifying the move from 'immortal' to 'imperishable' so much as presupposing it (for the moment; his next step will be to check with Cebes that he's happy about it), and spelling out what the immortality/imperishability of soul entails for any soul when death 'advances on' it.
174. *won't let death in*: I.e., won't let in deadness.

175. *at the onset of the even*: As when an odd number is doubled (see 105a).
176. *the gods*: Socrates uses the singular; Cebes' response has the plural 'gods'; both are talking about the same thing – the gods (plural). See also 61c, 62c, *Apology* 19a and elsewhere.
177. *immortal*: I.e., again, in terms of the preceding argument, 'un-dead', or deathless.
178. *there in Hades after all*: About this Hades, Socrates will shortly have a great deal more to say.
179. *if you analyse them*: The primary reference here will presumably be to what Socrates said in 99d–101e; see especially 101d–e, and his recommendations there about what one should do if required to 'give an account' of a hypothesis.
180. *except by becoming as good and wise as possible*: The implication plainly is that all of us will suffer, unless we become as wise and good as we can; since according to Socrates most of us don't pay much attention to such things, there will on his account be a lot of (unnecessary) suffering in the world. That squares with the fact that, on his account, most souls will go after death to the dismal shores of Lake Acheron, to undergo 'purification' before entering bodies again (113a–e).
181. *taking nothing with it . . . person who has died*: See 81d. 'The person who has died' is now represented, of course, only by his or her soul.
182. *What they say . . . on their journey from here to there*: While the idea of a judgement of the dead is at least as old as Homer, the details of the picture Socrates will paint certainly owe as much to Plato as they do to tradition. See General Introduction, §§2 and 3. 'Each person's own divinity': i.e., his or her own *daimôn*. It is hard not to think, here, of Socrates' talk about the 'divinity' – his 'divine something' – that intervenes with him (*Apology* 31c–d, with *Euthyphro* 3b); evidently the divinities in charge of others are less effective – or else these others are just less receptive than he is. 'Tries to bring him': and evidently, in some cases, it takes some doing (108a–b; cf. 81c–e). 'With the guide whose job it is to lead them on their journey from here to there': traditionally this would have been Hermes Psychagogos, Leader of Souls; the vagueness of Socrates' phrasing reflects the fact that he is actually transferring the job from Hermes to each person's 'divinity'.
183. *Aeschylus' hero Telephus*: Few of Aeschylus' tragedies survived; Socrates here refers to one of the many lost.
184. *a simple road to Hades*: The 'road to Hades' here probably

includes both the one to the initial place of judgement and the one that leads – or the ones that lead – on from there.

185. *there would be no need of guides*: I.e., like Hermes – or Socrates' new leaders of souls (see note 182 above).

186. *When it has arrived . . . turns aside from it*: 'The common destination for all souls' is the first destination, the place of judgement, where they will be assigned new, and very different, further destinations. 'Other such acts that are in fact akin to these and belong to kindred souls': Socrates' somewhat mysterious phrasing here may hint at a non-standard view of what the most serious offences are. Just how radical Plato's Socrates is capable of being may be judged from the extraordinary proposal, in the *Republic*, that it is 'a lesser mistake involuntarily to become someone's killer than (sc. involuntarily) to deceive decent people in relation to things just and lawful' (*Republic* 451a5–7). Alternatively, and less interestingly (or additionally), Socrates is just delaying a longer description – which he will give in 113e–114a.

187. *the skill of a Glaucus*: Beautifully explained by David Sedley, following Konrad Gaiser, as a reference to the Glaucus identified by Herodotus (I.25) as the inventor of welding. Accepting this explanation means also accepting Sedley's extremely attractive interpretation of the description that follows here, according to which Socrates is providing a sketch of the sort of explanation he earlier said he was looking for but couldn't find: one that would show how 'what is good and binding truly does bind and hold things together' (99c).

188. *doesn't need either air or any other such physical necessity to stop it from falling*: See 99b–c.

189. *the complete uniformity, everywhere, of the heavens . . . where it is*: So the earth stays where it is as part of an ordered system, in which (so, perhaps, the subtext runs), everything is 'as it is best for it to be': see note 187 above.

190. *the next thing*: I.e., the next thing he's been convinced about. None of what follows, right to the end of his story, is his; he owes it all to 'someone' (108c, and then, for later parts, to what 'is said': 110b).

191. *the Phasis river and the Pillars of Heracles*: 'The Phasis river' is the modern Rion, flowing into the eastern Black Sea. 'The Pillars of Heracles' are the rocks marking either side of the Straits of Gibraltar.

192. *those other things*: I.e., water, mist and air.

193. *its stones*: I.e., even its harder parts; but Socrates will soon be talking specifically about 'precious' stones.
194. *on islands, close to the mainland*: Presumably Socrates' (or rather his source's) version of the Isles of the Blest.
195. *Their seasons are of a blend*: Perhaps of hot, cold, dry and wet.
196. *to see better . . . ether surpasses air*: The (relatively) greater wisdom of these blessed folk seems to be connected directly with the fact that they see better, hear better and so on, both because they are equipped with superior senses and because the mediums through which they see and hear are superior; presumably the superior quality of what they see and hear around them also has something to do with it. All of this may perhaps help to put Socrates' earlier criticisms of the reliability of the senses into perspective: it is not so much that there is something unreliable in principle with sense-perception as a source of understanding of the world around us; the problem lies rather with the senses we happen to have, the mediums through which we happen to have to use them, the quality of the objects which we happen to have available to us.
197. *just as they also see sun, moon and stars for what they are*: See *Apology* 26d–e.
198. *and this oscillation occurs . . . the following kind*: In the second half of this last sentence Socrates finally gives up telling his story in indirect speech ('[it's said] that . . .'), but in fact he must still be telling his 'story', on someone else's authority rather than his own.
199. *'Far, far away . . . under the earth'*: *Iliad* 8.14.
200. *each river*: I.e., each kind of river, whether of water, fire, or mud (or of a particular kind of mud: 111d).
201. *Opposite this, and flowing in the contrary direction, is Acheron*: Acheron, after all, is the river of the dead, while Oceanus traditionally encircles the world of the living.
202. *they are sent back again . . . new living creatures*: See 81e–82b.
203. *issues*: I.e., from Tartarus.
204. *it does not mix with its water*: Thus it is associated with Acheron, but distinct from it; it will be the destination of a special category of the dead.
205. *Cocytus*: I.e., the River of Wailing; Pyriphlegethon is the River of Blazing Fire.
206. *conveyed by his divine guide*: See 107d.
207. *those judged to have lived a middling kind of life*: Or, just possibly, 'those thought to have . . .' – but there is no other indication

that the judges in the underworld are capable of getting things wrong in the way that their human counterparts do.

208. *there they reside . . . benefits bestowed*: All, in any case, seem to require 'purification' (from their excessive attachment to the body?).

209. *cease from their suffering*: I.e., what they were suffering in Cocytus and Pyriphlegethon; hardly from suffering altogether, since Acheron itself is not at all a pleasant place to be. In Athenian law, it seems, killers at least were not subject to legal action if their victims forgave them before dying.

210. *But those judged . . . surface of the earth*: Presumably Socrates himself might expect to be judged one of these; and his language suggests that he at least hopes he might qualify for the even greater prize that he is about to describe, albeit rather sketchily. 'Freed from these regions here, within the earth': either from Acheron, etc., or from 'worlds' like ours within the hollows (which will, after all, themselves be 'within the earth'); or from both.

211. *given that the soul is clearly something immortal*: This might appear to suggest rather more confidence than the phrase he used at 107c ('if the soul really is immortal').

212. *the risk, after all, is a fine one*: I.e., because the possible consequences are so fine.

213. *Such are the charms . . . spinning out my story*: It is hard, here, not to think back to Socrates' previous reference to 'charms', or incantations (*epôidai*) at 77e–78a. At first sight, it looks as if what he was calling a kind of incantation here is just the 'myth' or story he has just related – in which case, as his death approaches, he will apparently no longer be quite so wholehearted about his endorsement of the healing powers of reasoning: *arguments* were what he had in mind in the earlier context, and now he is recommending the use of mere *stories*. However his use of the expression 'long since' ('I've long since been spinning out my story') at least suggests the possibility that he intends here to include much more under 'my story' than the myth itself, perhaps the whole conversation of the *Phaedo*, or at least his whole 'defence', of which the myth is the final instalment. And after all, this 'myth' as he tells it is in most important respects continuous with earlier parts of the dialogue (nor in fact is it particularly long or 'spun out', at any rate by comparison with several other Platonic 'myths').

214. *waits thus prepared for the journey to Hades, whenever fate should summon him*: See the prohibition of suicide at 61d–62c.

215. *even if you don't presently agree with me about that*: I.e., because of your (misplaced) grief at my death. What exactly he expects them not to agree about, at least for now, is presumably that making themselves better and wiser people will please him, this being one of the things he himself has been trying to do, as well as pleasing them – because they're the ones directly benefited (as Socrates' children will benefit indirectly).
216. *even after having vehemently agreed with me . . . many times over*: It's true – Simmias and Cebes, at least, have gone on assenting to Socrates' proposals about the importance of caring for themselves and their souls; but the question is whether they will actually do anything about it.
217. *some happiness or other of the blest*: A striking phrase in the Greek, derived from the more standard 'Isles of the Blest' (for which see 111a).
218. *speaking imprecisely . . . also damages our souls*: I.e., presumably, by encouraging us to think in imprecise ways too.
219. *those women from his household arrived too*: This must refer primarily to Xanthippe (60a); the plural perhaps shows that she is accompanied by one or more female slaves (lamenting like Xanthippe?).
220. *the slave of the Eleven*: I.e., presumably, the prison guard of 59d–e.
221. *Farewell*: We should probably bear in mind the more literal meaning of the Greek (and of the English) here – 'be happy'.
222. *dying is something to be done in silence*: Usually it would be exactly the reverse, with plenty of noisy lamentation (of the sort provided, until Socrates cut it off, by 'the women of the household'). But Socrates, as we should know well enough by now, thinks death is no cause for lamentation – and hopes to be going off to join the company of gods, in which context 'words of good omen' (= saying nothing) might be rather more appropriate.
223. *Asclepius*: The god of healing.
224. *uncovered Socrates' face again, and his eyes were fixed*: According to Socrates, they will actually no longer be *his* eyes, if he is already dead. But the narrator Phaedo's point of view is not the same as Socrates', as his concluding remark to Echecrates will now confirm: 'This was the end of our companion.' (Were Socrates still there to respond, he might well have complained that Phaedo hadn't, after all, been listening.)